

THE
ODYSSEY OF HOMER,

TRANSLATED BY

WILLIAM COWPER.

EDITED BY

ROBERT SOUTHEY, LL.D.,

POET LAUREATE, ETC.

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PLATES IN THE EIGHTH VOLUME.

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A D V E R T I S E M E N T.

THE present volume concludes an edition of Cowper's Works, which the sanction of his still surviving administratrix, Mrs. BODHAM, and the access which the Editor has obtained to every collection of the Poet's letters, has enabled him to render as complete as it can be made from any known materials. He is obliged to the Rev. Egerton Bagot for permitting him to inspect the letters addressed to his father, Cowper's earliest correspondent, and the only one of his early friends who sought him in his retirement. To Mr. Jekyll he is obliged for access to those addressed to Mr. Hill. Mrs. Charlotte Smith favoured him with the letter to her mother, who in her own generation was not surpassed as a novelist, nor equalled as a poetess. From his old friend Mr. Cottle the two letters to Mr. Churcley, were obtained, the Welch attorney¹, who sent Cowper his verses to revise, and obligingly asked,

“ Say, shall my little bark attendant sail,
Pursue the triumph and partake the gale ?”

He has also to thank Mr. Meek for entrusting him with Cowper's interleaved and annotated copy of the *Paradise Lost*, purchased by that gentleman at the sale of Hayley's Library.

¹ Vol. i. p. 401. Vol. iii. p. 375.

A mistake which Hayley has made, and which Mr. Grimshawe has repeated, it is proper to correct in this place. They have stated that Cowper died intestate,—whereas he left a will,—and such a one, that though its provisions had been nullified by the lapse of time, and the death of the principal legatee, it certainly would not have been withheld, either from, or by his first biographer, had not Lady Hesketh wished as much as possible to withhold every thing relating to his narrow circumstances, or his malady, both which it will be seen are alluded to with much feeling in this affecting document.

KESWICK, Aug. 12, 1837.

EXTRACTED FROM THE REGISTER OF THE PREROGATIVE
COURT OF CANTERBURY.

I WM. COWPER, of Olney, in the county of Bucks, do make this my last Will and Testament. I give to Mrs. Mary Unwin the sum of three hundred pounds, or whatever sum shall be standing in my name in the books of the Bank of England at the time of my decease. I give to Mr. Joseph Hill, of Great Queen Street, whatever money of mine he may have in his hands, arising from the bond of my Chambers in the Temple, or may be due for the same at the time of my decease: and my desire is, that such money as he may have received on my account in the way of contribution, and not remitted to me, may be returned to those who gave it, with the best acknowledgements I have it in my power to render them for their kindness. I have written this with my own hand, and the contents may sufficiently prove that I am in my senses.

MAY 20, 1777.

WM. COWPER.

EIGHTEENTH AUG. 1800.

On which day appeared personally Theodosia Hill and Frances Hill, both of Reading in the county of Berks, spinsters, and jointly and severally made oath that they knew and were well acquainted with William Cowper, formerly of the Temple, London, afterwards of Olney in the county of Bucks, but late of East Dereham in the county of Norfolk, Esquire, deceased, and having frequently seen him write and subscribe his name, are thereby become well acquainted with his manner and character of hand-writing and subscription; and having now carefully viewed and perused the paper writing hereto annexed, purporting to be and containing the last Will and Testament of the said deceased, beginning thus, "I Wm. Cowper, of Olney, in the county of Bucks, do make this my last Will and Testament," and ending thus, "I have written this with my own hand, and the contents may sufficiently prove that I am in my senses," and thus subscribed, "Wm. Cowper," they the appearers do verily and in their consciences believe the whole series and contents of the said paper writing, beginning, ending, and subscribing as aforesaid, to be all of the proper hand-writing and subscription of him the said William Cowper, Esquire, deceased. THEO. HILL. FRANCES HILL.—Same day the said Theodosia Hill and Frances Hill were duly sworn to the truth of this affidavit, before me, PH. NIND, Commissioner.

ON the sixth day of September, in the year of our Lord 1800, administration with the will annexed, of all and singular the goods, chattels, and credits of William Cowper, formerly of the Temple, London, afterwards of Olney in the county of Bucks, but late of East Dereham in the county of Norfolk, Esquire, deceased, was granted to Dame Harriet Hesketh, widow, the cousin german and one of the next of kin of the said deceased, she having been first sworn by Commissioner duly to administer, no executor or residuary legatee being named in the said will.

ON the twenty-sixth day of November, 1807, administration with the will annexed, of the goods, chattels, and credits of William Cowper, formerly of the Temple, London, afterwards

of Olney in the county of Bucks, but late of East Dereham in the county of Norfolk, Esquire, a bachelor, deceased, left unadministered by Dame Harriet Hesketh, widow, deceased, whilst living, the cousin german and one of the next of kin of the said deceased, was granted to Anne Bodham, widow, the cousin german also and one other of the next of kin of the said deceased, having been first sworn by Commissioner duly to administer, no executor or residuary legatee being named in the said will.

CHAS. DYNELEY.
JOHN IGGULDEN.
W. F. GOSTLING. } Deputy Registrars.

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THE
ODYSSEY OF HOMER.

BOOK I.

ARGUMENT.

In a council of the Gods, Minerva calls their attention to Ulysses, still a wanderer. They resolve to grant him a safe return to Ithaca. Minerva descends to encourage Telemachus, and in the form of Mentes directs him in what manner to proceed. Throughout this book the extravagance and profligacy of the suitors are occasionally suggested.

MUSE, make the man thy theme, for shrewdness famed
And genius versatile, who far and wide
A Wanderer, after Ilium overthrown,
Discovered various cities, and the mind
And manners learn'd of men in lands remote. 5
He numerous woes, on Ocean toss'd, endured,
Anxious to save himself, and to conduct
His followers to their home ; yet all his care
Preserved them not ; they perish'd self-destroy'd
By their own fault ; infatuate ! who devour'd
The oxen of the all-o'erseeing Sun, 10
And, punish'd for that crime, return'd no more.
Daughter divine of Jove, these things record,
As it may please thee, even in our ears.

The rest, all those who had perdition 'scaped
By war or on the Deep, dwelt now at home ;
Him only, of his country and his wife
Alike desirous, in her hollow grots
Calypso, Goddess beautiful, detain'd 15

Wooing him to her arms. But when, at length,
 (Many a long year elapsed,) the year arrived
 Of his return (by the decree of Heaven)
 To Ithaca, not even then had he,
 Although surrounded by his people, reach'd
 The period of his sufferings and his toils. 25
 Yet all the Gods, with pity moved, beheld
 His woes, save Neptune ; He alone with wrath
 Unceasing and implacable pursued
 Godlike Ulysses to his native shores.
 But Neptune, now, the *Æthiopians* sought, 30
 (The *Æthiopians*, utmost of mankind,
 These Eastward situate, those toward the West,)
 Call'd to an hecatomb of bulls and lambs.
 There sitting, pleased he banquetted ; the Gods
 In Jove's abode, meantime, assembled all, 35
 'Midst whom the Sire of heaven and earth began.
 For he recalled to mind *Ægisthus* slain
 By Agamemnon's celebrated son
 Orestes, and retracing in his thought
 That dread event, the Immortals thus address'd. 40
 Alas ! how prone are human-kind to blame
 The Powers of Heaven ! From us, they say, proceed
 The ills which they endure, yet more than Fate
 Herself inflicts, by their own crimes incur.
 So now *Ægisthus*, by no force constrain'd 45
 Of Destiny, Atrides' wedded wife
 Took to himself, and him at his return
 Slew, not unwarn'd of his own dreadful end
 By us ; for we commanded Hermes down
 The watchful Argicide, who bade him fear
 Alike, to slay the King, or woo the Queen : 50
 For that Atrides' son Orestes, soon
 As grown mature, and eager to assume
 His sway imperial, should avenge the deed.
 So Hermes spake, but his advice moved not
Ægisthus, on whose head the whole arrear 55
 Of vengeance heap'd, at last, hath therefore fallen.
 Whom answer'd then Pallas coerulean-eyed.
 Oh Jove, Saturnian Sire, o'er all supreme !
 And well he merited the death he found ; 60

So perish all who shall, like him, offend.
 But with a bosom anguish-rent I view
 Ulysses, hapless Chief, who from his friends
 Remote, affliction hath long time endured
 In yonder woodland isle, the central boss 65
 Of Ocean. That retreat a Goddess holds,
 Daughter of sapient Atlas, who the abyss
 Knows to its bottom, and the pillars high
 Himself upbears which separate earth from heaven.
 His daughter, there, the sorrowing Chief detains, 70
 And ever with smooth speech insidious seeks
 To wean his heart from Ithaca ; meantime
 Ulysses, happy might he but behold
 The smoke ascending from his native land,
 Death covets. Canst thou not, Olympian Jove ! 75
 At last relent ? Hath not Ulysses oft
 With victims slain amid Achaia's fleet
 Thee gratified while yet at Troy he fought ?
 How hath he then so deep incensed thee, Jove ?
 To whom the cloud-assembler God replied. 80
 What word hath pass'd thy lips, Daughter beloved ?
 Can I forget Ulysses ? Him forget
 So noble, who in wisdom all mankind
 Excels, and who hath sacrificed so oft
 To us whose dwelling is the boundless heaven ! 85
 Earth-circling Neptune—He it is whose wrath
 Pursues him ceaseless for the Cyclops' sake
 Polypheme, strongest of the giant race,
 Whom of his eye Ulysses hath deprived.
 For Him, Thoësa bore, Nymph of the sea 90
 From Phorcys sprung, by Ocean's mighty power
 Impregnated in caverns of the Deep.
 E'er since that day, the Shaker of the shores,
 Although he slay him not, yet devious drives
 Ulysses from his native isle afar. 95
 Yet come—in full assembly his return
 Contrive we now, both means and prosperous end ;
 So Neptune shall his wrath remit, whose power
 In contest with the force of all the Gods
 Exerted single, can but strive in vain. 100
 To whom Minerva, Goddess azure-eyed.

Oh Jupiter! above all Kings enthroned!
 If the Immortals ever-blest ordain
 That wise Ulysses to his home return,
 Dispatch we then Hermes the Argicide,
 Our messenger, hence to Ogygia's isle,
 Who shall inform Calypso, nymph divine,
 Of this our fix'd resolve, that to his home
 Ulysses, toil-enduring Chief, repair.

105

Myself will hence to Ithaca, meantime,
 His son to animate, and with new force
 Inspire, that (the Achaians all convened
 In council,) he may, instant, bid depart
 The suitors from his home, who, day by day,
 His numerous flocks and fatted herds consume.
 And I will send him thence to Sparta forth,
 And into sandy Pylus, there to hear
 (If hear he may) some tidings of his Sire,
 And to procure himself a glorious name.

110

This said, her golden sandals to her feet
 She bound, ambrosial, which o'er all the earth
 And o'er the moist flood waft her fleet as air;
 Then, seizing her strong spear pointed with brass,
 In length and bulk and weight a matchless beam,
 With which the Jove-born Goddess levels ranks
 Of Heroes, against whom her anger burns,
 From the Olympian summit down she flew,
 And on the threshold of Ulysses' hall
 In Ithaca, and within his vestibule

115

Apparent stood; there, grasping her bright spear,
 Mentes¹ she seem'd, the hospitable Chief
 Of Taphos' isle. She found the haughty throng
 The suitors; they before the palace gate
 With ivory cubes sported, on numerous hides
 Reclined of oxen which themselves had slain.
 The heralds and the busy menials there
 Minister'd to them; these their mantling cups
 With water slaked; with bibulous sponges those
 Made clean the tables, set the banquet on,

120

125

130

135

¹ We are told that Homer was under obligations to Mentes, who had frequently given him a passage in his ship to different countries which he wished to see, for which reason he has here immortalized him.

And portion'd out to each his plenteous share. 140
 Long ere the rest Telemachus himself
 Mark'd her, for sad amid them all he sat,
 Pourtraying in deep thought contemplative
 His noble Sire, and questioning if yet
 Perchance the Hero might return to chase 145
 From all his palace that imperious herd,
 To his own honour lord of his own home.
 Amid them musing thus, sudden he saw
 The Goddess, and sprang forth, for he abhor'd
 To see a guest's admittance long delay'd ; 150
 Approaching eager her right hand he seized.
 The brazen spear took from her, and in words
 With welcome wing'd Minerva thus address'd.
 Stranger, all hail ! to share our cordial love
 Thou comest ; the banquet finish'd, thou shalt next 155
 Inform me wherefore thou hast here arrived.
 So saying, toward the spacious hall he moved,
 Followed by Pallas, and, arriving soon
 Beneath the lofty roof, placed her bright spear
 Within a pillar's cavity, long time 160
 The armoury where many a spear had stood,
 Bright weapons of his own illustrious Sire.
 Then, leading her toward a footstool'd throne
 Magnificent, which first he overspread
 With linen, there he seated her, apart 165
 From that rude throng, and for himself disposed
 A throne of various colours at her side,
 Lest, stunn'd with clamour of the lawless band,
 The new-arrived should loth perchance to eat,
 And that more free he might the stranger's ear 170
 With questions of his absent Sire address.
 And now a maiden charged with golden ewer,
 And with an argent laver, pouring first
 Pure water on their hands, supplied them, next,
 With a resplendent table, which the chaste 175
 Directress of the stores furnished with bread
 And dainties, remnants of the last regale.
 Then, in his turn, the sewer² with savoury meats

² Milton uses the word—

Sewers and seneschals.

Dish after dish, served them, of various kinds,
And golden cups beside the chargers placed,
Which the attendant herald fill'd with wine. 180

Ere long, in rush'd the suitors, and the thrones
And couches occupied, on all whose hands
The heralds pour'd pure water ; then the maids
Attended them with bread in baskets heap'd,
And eager they assail'd the ready feast. 185

At length, when neither thirst nor hunger more
They felt unsatisfied, to new delights
Their thoughts they turn'd, to song and sprightly dance,
Enlivening sequel of the banquet's joys. 190

An herald, then to Phemius' hand consign'd
His beauteous lyre ; he through constraint regaled
The suitors with his song, and while the chords
He struck in prelude to his pleasant strains,
Telemachus his head inclining nigh 195

To Pallas' ear, lest others should his words
Witness, the blue-eyed Goddess thus bespeak.

My inmate and my friend ! far from my lips
Be every word that might displease thine ear !
The song—the harp,—what can they less than charm 200

These wantons ? who the bread unpurchas'd eat
Of one whose bones on yonder continent
Lie mouldering, drench'd by all the showers of heaven,
Or roll at random in the billowy deep.

Ah ! could they see him once to his own isle
Restored, both gold and raiment they would wish
Far less, and nimbleness of foot instead. 205

But He, alas ! hath by a wretched fate
Past question perish'd, and what news soe'er
We hear of his return, kindles no hope
In us, convinced that he returns no more.

But answer undissembling ; tell me true ;
Who art thou ? whence ? where stands thy city ? where
Thy father's mansion ? In what kind of ship
Camest thou ? Why steer'd the mariners their course 210

To Ithaca, and of what land are they ?
For that on foot thou found'st us not, is sure.
This also tell me, hast thou now arrived

New to our isle, or wast thou heretofore
 My father's guest ? since many to our house
 Resorted in those happier days, for he
 Drew powerful to himself the hearts of all.

220

Then Pallas thus, Goddess cœrulean-ey'd.

I will with all simplicity of truth

Thy questions satisfy. Behold in me

225

Mentes, the offspring of a Chief renown'd

In war, Anchialus ; and I rule, myself,

An island race, the Taphians oar-expert.

With ship and mariners I now arrive,

Seeking a people of another tongue

230

Athwart the gloomy flood, in quest of brass

For which I barter steel, ploughing the waves

To Temesa. My ship beneath the woods

Of Neïus, at yonder field that skirts

Your city, in the haven Rhethrus rides.

235

We are hereditary guests ; our Sires

Were friends long since ; as, when thou seest him next,

The Hero old Laertes will avouch,

Of whom, I learn, that he frequents no more

The city now, but in sequester'd scenes

240

Dwells sorrowful, and by an ancient dame

With food and drink supplied oft as he feels

Refreshment needful to him, while he creeps

Between the rows of his luxuriant vines.

But I have come drawn hither by report,

245

Which spake thy Sire arrived, though still it seems

The adverse Gods his homeward course retard.

For not yet breathless lies the noble Chief,

But in some island of the boundless flood

Resides a prisoner, by barbarous force

250

Of some rude race detain'd reluctant there.

And I will now foreshow thee what the Gods

Teach me, and what, though neither augur skill'd

Nor prophet, I yet trust shall come to pass.

He shall not, henceforth, live an exile long

255

From his own shores, no, not although in bands

Of iron held, but will ere long contrive

His own return ; for in expedients, fram'd

With wondrous ingenuity, he abounds.

But tell me true ; art thou, in stature such,
 Son of himself Ulysses ? for thy face
 And eyes bright-sparkling, strongly indicate
 Ulysses in thee. Frequent have we both
 Conversed together thus, thy Sire and I,
 Ere yet he went to Troy, the mark to which
 So many princes of Achaia steer'd.
 Him since I saw not, nor Ulysses me.

260

To whom, Telemachus, discreet, replied.
 Stranger ! I tell thee true ; my mother's voice
 Affirms me his, but, since no mortal knows
 His derivation, I affirm it not.

265

Would I had been son of some happier sire,
 Ordain'd in calm possession of his own
 To reach the verge of life. But now, report
 Proclaims me his, whom I of all mankind
 Unhappiest deem.—Thy question is resolved.

275

Then answer thus Pallas blue-ey'd return'd.
 From no ignoble race, in future days,
 The Gods shall prove thee sprung, whom so endow'd
 With every grace Penelope hath borne.

280

But tell me true. What festival is this ?
 This throng,—whence are they ? wherefore hast thou need
 Of such a multitude ? Behold I here
 A banquet, or a nuptial feast ? for these
 Meet not by contribution³ to regale,
 With such brutality and din they hold
 Their riotous banquet ! A wise man and good
 Arriving, now, among them, at the sight
 Of such enormities would much be wroth.

285

To whom replied Telemachus discreet.
 Since, stranger ! thou hast ask'd, learn also this.
 While yet Ulysses with his people dwelt,
 His presence warranted the hope that here
 Virtue should dwell and opulence ; but Heaven
 Hath cast for us, at length, a different lot,
 And he is lost, as never man before.

290

³ "Egavoc, a convivial meeting, at which every man paid his proportion, at least contributed something ; but it seems to have been a meeting at which strict sobriety was observed, else Pallas would not have inferred from the noise and riot of this, that it was not such a one.

For I should less lament even his death,
 Had he among his friends at Ilium fallen,
 Or in the arms of his companions died,
 Troy's siege accomplish'd. Then his tomb the Greeks 300
 Of every tribe had built, and for his son,
 He had immortal glory achiev'd ; but now,
 By harpies torn inglorious, beyond reach
 Of eye or ear he lies ; and hath to me
 Grief only, and unceasing sighs bequeath'd. 305
 Nor mourn I for his sake alone ; the Gods
 Have plann'd for me still many a woe beside ;
 For all the rulers of the neighbour isles,
 Samos, Dulichium, and the forest-crown'd
 Zacynthus, others also, rulers here 310
 In craggy Ithaca, my mother seek
 In marriage, and my household stores consume.
 But neither she those nuptial rites abhor'd
 Refuses absolute, nor yet consents
 To end them ; they my patrimony waste 315
 Meantime, and will not long spare even me.
 To whom, with deep commiseration pang'd,
 Pallas replied. Alas ! great need hast thou
 Of thy long-absent father to avenge
 These numerous wrongs ; for could he now appear 320
 There, at yon portal, arm'd with helmet, shield,
 And grasping his two spears, such as when first
 I saw him drinking joyous at our board,
 From Ilus son of Mermeris, who dwelt
 In distant Ephyre, just then return'd, 325
 (For thither also had Ulysses gone
 In his swift bark, seeking some poisonous drug
 Wherewith to taint his brazen arrows keen,
 Which drug through fear of the eternal Gods
 Ilus refused him, and my father free 330
 Gave to him, for he loved him past belief ;)
 Could now, Ulysses, clad in arms as then,
 Mix with these suitors, short his date of life
 To each, and bitter should his nuptials prove.
 But these events, whether he shall return 335
 To take just vengeance under his own roof,
 Or whether not, lie all in the Gods' lap.

Meantime I counsel thee, thyself to think
 By what means likeliest thou shalt expel
 These from thy doors. Now mark me : close attend. 340
 To-morrow, summoning the Grecian Chiefs
 To council, speak to them, and call the Gods
 To witness that solemnity. Bid go
 The suitors hence, each to his own abode.
 Thy mother—if her purpose be resolved
 On marriage, let her to the house return
 Of her own potent father, who, himself,
 Shall furnish forth her matrimonial rites,
 And ample dower, such as it well becomes
 A darling daughter to receive, bestow. 345
 But hear me now ; thyself I thus advise.
 The prime of all thy ships preparing, mann'd
 With twenty rowers, voyage hence to seek
 Intelligence of thy long-absent Sire.
 Some mortal may inform thee, or a word⁴,
 Perchance, by Jove directed (safest source
 Of notice to mankind) may reach thine ear. 355
 First voyaging to Pylus, there enquire
 Of noble Netsor ; thence to Sparta tend,
 To question Menelaus amber-hair'd,
 Latest arrived of all the host of Greece. 360
 There should'st thou learn that still thy father lives,
 And hope obtain of his return, although
 Distress'd, thou wilt be patient yet a year.
 But should'st thou there hear tidings that he breathes
 No longer, to thy native isle return'd, 365
 First heap his tomb ; then with such pomp perform
 His funeral rites as his great name demands,
 And make thy mother's spousals, next, thy care.
 These duties satisfied, deliberate last
 Whether thou shalt these troublers of thy house 370
 By stratagem, or by assault, destroy :
 For thou art now no child, nor longer mayest
 Sport like one. Hast thou not the proud report
 Heard, how Orestes hath renown acquired 375

⁴ "Οὐρα—a word spoken, with respect to the speaker, casually ; but with reference to the inquirer supposed to be sent for his information by the especial appointment and providential favour of the Gods.

With all mankind his father's murderer
 Agisthus slaying, the deceiver base
 Who slaughter'd Agamemnon ? Oh my friend !
 (For with delight thy vigorous growth I view,
 And just proportion,) be thou also bold,
 And merit praise from ages yet to come. 380
 But I will to my vessel now repair,
 And to my mariners, whom, absent long,
 I may perchance have troubled. Weigh thou well
 My counsel ; let not my advice be lost. 385
 To whom Telemachus discreet replied,
 Stranger ! thy words bespeak thee much my friend,
 Who, as a father teaches his own son,
 Has taught me, and I never will forget.
 But, though in haste thy voyage to pursue, 390
 Yet stay, that in the bath refreshing first
 Thy limbs now weary, thou may'st sprightlier seek
 Thy gallant bark, charged with some noble gift
 Of finish'd workmanship, which thou shalt keep
 As my memorial ever ; such a boon 395
 As men confer on guests whom much they love.
 Then Pallas thus, Goddess coerulean-eyed.
 Retard me not, for go I must ; the gift
 Which liberal thou desirest to bestow,
 Give me at my return, that I may bear 400
 The treasure home ; and, in exchange, thyself
 Expect some gift equivalent from me.
 She spake, and as with eagle-wings upborne,
 Vanish'd incontinent, but him inspired
 With daring fortitude, and on his heart
 Dearer remembrance of his Sire impress'd
 Than ever. Conscious of the wondrous change, 405
 Amazed he stood, and in his secret thought
 Revolving all, believed his guest a God.
 The youthful Hero to the suitors then
 Repair'd ; they silent, listen'd to the song
 Of the illustrious Bard ; he the return
 Deplorable of the Achaian host 410
 From Ilium by command of Pallas, sang.
 Penelope, Icarus' daughter, mark'd
 Meantime the song celestial, where she sat 415

In the superior palace ; down she came,
By all the numerous steps of her abode ;
Not sole, for two fair handmaids follow'd her.

She then, divinest of her sex, arrived

In presence of that lawless throng, beneath

The portal of her stately mansion stood,

Between her maidens, and with lucid veil

Her lovely features mantling. There profuse

She wept, and thus the sacred bard bespake.

420

Phemius ! for many a sorrow-soothing strain

Thou know'st beside, such as exploits record

Of Gods and men, the poet's frequent theme ;

Give them of those a song, and let themselves

Their wine drink noiseless ; but this mournful strain

430

Break off, unfriendly to my bosom's peace,

And which of all hearts nearest touches mine ;

With such regret my dearest lord I mourn,

Remembering still an husband praised from side

To side, and in the very heart of Greece.

435

Then answer thus Telemachus return'd.

My mother ! wherefore should it give thee pain

If the delightful bard that theme pursue

To which he feels his mind impell'd ? the bard

Blame not, but rather Jove, who, as he wills,

440

Materials for poetic art supplies.

No fault is his, if the disastrous fate

He sing of the Achaians, for the song

Wins ever from the hearers most applause

That has been least in use. Of all who fought

445

At Troy, Ulysses hath not lost, alone,

His day of glad return ; but many a Chief

Hath perish'd also. Seek thou then again

Thy own apartment, spindle ply and loom,

And task thy maidens ; management belongs

450

To men of joys convivial, and of men

Especially to me, chief ruler here.

She heard astonish'd ; and the prudent speech

Reposing of her son deep in her heart,

Again with her attendant maidens sought

455

Her upper chamber. There arrived, she wept

Her lost Ulysses, till Minerva bathed

Her weary lids in dewy sleep profound.
 Then echoed through the palace dark-bedimm'd
 With evening shades, the suitors' boisterous roar,
 For each the royal bed burn'd to partake,
 Whom thus Telemachus discreet address'd.

All ye my mother's suitors, though addict
 To contumacious wrangling fierce, suspend
 Your clamour, for a course to me it seems
 More decent far, when such a bard as this,
 Godlike for sweetness, sings, to hear his song.
 To-morrow meet we in full council all,
 That I may plainly warn you to depart
 From this our mansion. Seek ye where ye may
 Your feasts; consume your own, alternate fed
 Each at the other's cost; but if it seem
 Wisest in your account and best, to eat
 Voracious thus the patrimonial goods
 Of one man, rendering⁵ no account of all,
 Bite to the roots; but know that I will cry
 Ceaseless to the eternal Gods, in hope
 That Jove, for retribution of the wrong,
 Shall doom you, where ye have intruded, there
 To bleed, and of your blood ask⁵ no account.

He ended, and each gnaw'd his lip, aghast
 At his undaunted hardiness of speech.

Then thus Antinoüs spake, Eupithe's son.
 Telemachus! the Gods, methinks, themselves
 Teach thee sublimity, and to pronounce
 Thy matter fearless. Ah forbid it, Jove!
 That one so eloquent should with the weight
 Of kingly cares in Ithaca be charged,
 A realm, by claim hereditary, thine.

Then prudent thus Telemachus replied.
 Although my speech, Antinoüs, may, perchance,
 Provoke thee, know that I am not averse
 From kingly cares, if Jove appoint me such.

⁵ There is in the Original an evident stress laid on the word *Nýποντος*, which is used in both places. It was a sort of Lex Talionis which Telemachus hoped might be put in force against them; and that Jove would demand no satisfaction for the lives of those, who made him none for the waste of his property.

Seems it to thee a burthen to be fear'd
 By men above all others ? trust me, no.
 There is no ill in royalty ; the man
 So station'd, waits not long ere he obtain
 Riches and honour. But I grant that Kings
 Of the Achaians may no few be found
 In sea-girt Ithaca both young and old,
 Of whom since great Ulysses is no more,
 Reign whoso may ; but King, myself, I am
 In my own house, and over all my own
 Domestics, by Ulysses gained for me.

495

To whom Eurymachus replied, the son
 Of Polybus. What Grecian Chief shall reign
 In sea-girt Ithaca, must be referr'd
 To the Gods' will, Telemachus ! meantime
 Thou hast unquestionable right to keep
 Thy own, and to command in thy own house.
 May never that man on her shores arrive,
 While an inhabitant shall yet be left
 In Ithaca, who shall by violence wrest
 Thine from thee. But permit me, noble Sir !
 To ask thee of thy guest. Whence came the man ?
 What country claims him ? Where are to be found
 His kindred and his patrimonial fields ?
 Brings he glad tidings of thy Sire's approach
 Homeward ? or came he to receive a debt
 Due to himself ? How swift he disappear'd !
 Nor opportunity to know him gave
 To those who wish'd it ; for his face and air
 Him speak not of Plebeian birth obscure.

510

515

520

Whom answer'd thus Telemachus discreet.
 Eurymachus ! my father comes no more.
 I can no longer, now, tidings believe,
 If such arrive ; nor heed I more the song
 Of sooth-sayers whom my mother may consult.
 But this my guest hath known in other days
 My father, and he came from Taphos, son
 Of brave Anchialus, Mentes by name,
 And Chief of the sea-practised Taphian race.

525

530

So spake Telemachus, but in his heart
 Knew well his guest a Goddess from the skies.

Then they to dance and heart-enlivening song 535
Turn'd joyous, waiting the approach of eve,
And dusky evening found them joyous still.
Then each, to his own house retiring, sought
Needful repose. Meantime Telemachus
To his own lofty chamber, built in view 540
Of the wide hall, retired ; but with a heart
In various musings occupied intense.
Sage Euryclea, bearing in each hand
A torch, preceded him ; her sire was Ops, 545
Pisenor's son, and in her early prime,
At his own cost Laertes made her his,
Paying with twenty beeves her purchase-price.
Nor in less honour than his spotless wife
He held her ever, but his consort's wrath 550
Fearing, at no time call'd her to his bed.
She bore the torches, and with truer heart
Loved him than any of the female train,
For she had nursed him in his infant years.
He opened his broad chamber-valves, and sat 555
On his couch-side ; then, putting off his vest
Of softest texture, placed it in the hands
Of the attendant dame, discreet, who first
Folding it with exactest care, beside
His bed suspended it, and going forth, 560
Drew by its silver ring the portal close,
And fasten'd it with bolt and brace secure.
There lay Telemachus, on finest wool
Reposed, contemplating all night his course
Prescribed by Pallas to the Pylian shore.

BOOK II.

ARGUMENT.

Telemachus having convened an assembly of the Grecians, publicly calls on the Suitors to relinquish the house of Ulysses. During the continuance of the Council he has much to suffer from the petulance of the Suitors, from whom, having informed them of his design to undertake a voyage in hope to obtain news of Ulysses, he asks a ship, with all things necessary for the purpose. He is refused, but is afterwards furnished with what he wants by Minerva, in the form of Mentor. He embarks in the evening without the privity of his mother, and the Goddess sails with him.

AURORA, rosy daughter of the dawn,
Now tinged the East, when, habited again,
Uprose Ulysses' offspring from his bed.
Athwart his back his faulchion keen he slung,
His sandals bound to his unsullied feet, 5
And, Godlike, issued from his chamber-door.
At once the clear-voiced heralds he enjoin'd
To call the Greeks to council ; they aloud
Gave forth the summons, and the throng began.
When all were gather'd, and the assembly full, 10
Himself, his hand armed with a brazen spear,
Went also ; nor alone he went ; his hounds
Fleet-footed follow'd him a faithful pair.
O'er all his form Minerva largely shed
Majestic grace divine, and, as he went, 15
The whole admiring concourse gazed on him.
The seniors gave him place, and down he sat
On his paternal Throne. Then grave arose
The Hero, old Ægyptius ; bow'd with age
Was he, and by experience deep-inform'd. 20
His son had with Ulysses, godlike Chief,
On board his fleet to steed-famed Ilium gone,
The warrior Antiphus, whom in his cave
The savage Cyclops slew, and on his flesh
At evening made obscene his last regale. 25
Three sons he had beside, a suitor one,

5

10

15

20

25

Eurynomus; the other two, employ
Found constant managing their Sire's concerns.
Yet he forgat not, father as he was
Of these, his absent eldest whom he mourn'd
Ceaseless, and thus his speech, weeping, began.

Hear me, ye men of Ithaca, my friends !
Nor council here nor session hath been held
Since great Ulysses left his native shore.
Who now convenes us ? what especial need
Hath urged him, whether of our youth he be,
Or of our senators by age matured ?
Have tidings reach'd him of our host's return,
Which here he would divulge ? or brings he aught
Of public import on a different theme ?
I deem him, whomsoe'er he be, a man
Worthy to prosper, and may Jove vouchsafe
The full performance of his chief desire !

He ended, and Telemachus rejoiced
In that good omen. Ardent to begin,
He sat not long, but moving to the midst,
Received the sceptre from Pisenor's hand,
His prudent herald, and addressing, next,
The hoary Chief Ægyptius, thus began.

Not far remote, as thou shalt soon thyself
Perceive, oh venerable Chief ! he stands,
Who hath convened this council. I, am He.
I am in chief the sufferer. Tidings none
Of the returning host I have received,
Which here I would divulge, nor bring I aught
Of public import on a different theme,
But my own trouble, on my own house fallen,
And two-fold fallen. One is, that I have lost
A noble father, who, as fathers rule
Benign their children, govern'd once yourselves ;
The other, and the more alarming ill,
With ruin threatens my whole house, and all
My patrimony with immediate waste.
Suitors, (their children who in this our isle
Hold highest rank,) importunate besiege
My mother, though desirous not to wed ;
And rather than resort to her own Sire

Icarius, who might give his daughter dower,
 And portion her to whom he most approves,
 (A course which, only named, moves their disgust,) 70
 They choose, assembling all within my gates
 Daily to make my beeves, my sheep, my goats
 Their banquet, and to drink without restraint
 My wine ; whence ruin threatens us and ours ;
 For I have no Ulysses to relieve 75
 Me and my family from this abuse.
 Ourselves are not sufficient ; we, alas !
 Too feeble should be found, and yet to learn
 How best to use the little force we own ;
 Else, had I power, I would, myself, redress 80
 The evil ; for it now surpasses far
 All sufferance, now they ravage uncontrol'd,
 Nor show of decency vouchsafe me more.
 Oh be¹ ashamed yourselves ; blush at the thought
 Of such reproach as ye shall sure incur 85
 From all our neighbour states, and fear beside
 The wrath of the Immortals, lest they call
 Yourselves one day to a severe account.
 I pray you by Olympian Jove, by her
 Whose voice convenes all councils, and again 90
 Dissolves them, Themis, that henceforth ye cease,
 That ye permit me, oh my friends ! to wear
 My days in solitary grief away,
 Unless Ulysses, my illustrious Sire,
 Hath in his anger any Grecian wrong'd 95
 Whose wrongs ye purpose to avenge on me,
 Inciting these to plague me. Better far
 Were my condition, if yourselves consumed
 My substance and my revenue ; from you
 I might obtain, perchance, righteous amends 100
 Hereafter ; you I might with vehement suit
 O'ercome, from house to house pleading aloud
 For recompense, till I at last prevail'd ;
 But now, with darts of anguish ye transfix
 My inmost soul, and I have no redress. 105

¹ The reader is to be reminded that this is not an assembly of the suitors only, but a general one, which affords Telemachus an opportunity to apply himself to the feelings of the Ithacans at large.

He spake impassion'd, and to earth cast down
 His sceptre, weeping. Pity at the sight
 Seized all the people; mute the assembly sat
 Long time, none dared to greet Telemachus
 With answer rough, till of them all, at last, 110
 Antinoüs, sole arising, thus replied.

Telemachus, intemperate in harangue,
 High-sounding orator! it is thy drift
 To make us all odious; but the offence
 Lies not with us the suitors; she alone 115
 Thy mother, who in subtlety excels,
 And deep-wrought subterfuge, deserves the blame.

It is already the third year, and soon
 Shall be the fourth, since with delusive art
 Practising on their minds, she hath deceived 120
 The Grecians; message after message sent
 Brings hope to each, by turns, and promise fair,
 But she, meantime, far otherwise intends.

Her other arts exhausted all, she framed
 This stratagem; a web of amplest size 125
 And subtlest woof beginning, thus she spake.
 Princes, my suitors! since the noble Chief
 Ulysses is no more, press not as yet
 My nuptials; wait till I shall finish, first,

A funeral robe (lest all my threads decay) 130
 Which for the ancient Hero I prepare,
 Laertes, looking for the mournful hour
 When fate shall snatch him to eternal rest;
 Else, I the censure dread of all my sex,

Should he, so wealthy, want at last a shroud. 135
 So spake the Queen, and unsuspecting, we
 With her request complied. Thenceforth, all day
 She wove the ample web, and by the aid
 Of torches ravell'd it again at night.

Three years by such contrivance she deceived 140
 The Grecians; but when (three whole years elapsed)
 The fourth arrived, then conscious of the fraud,
 A damsel of her train told all the truth,
 And her we found ravelling the beauteous work.
 Thus, through necessity she hath, at length, 145
 Perform'd the task, and in her own despite.

Now therefore, for the information clear
 Of thee thyself, and of the other Greeks,
 We answer. Send thy mother hence, with charge
 That him she wed, on whom her father's choice
 Shall fall, and whom she shall herself approve. 150
 But if by long procrastination still
 She persevere, wearing our patience out,
 Attentive only to display the gifts
 By Pallas so profusely dealt to her, 155
 Works of surpassing skill, ingenious thought,
 And subtle shifts, such as no beauteous Greek
 (For aught that we have heard) in ancient times
 E'er practised, Tyro, or Alcmena fair,
 Or fair Mycene, of whom none in art 160
 E'er match'd Penelope, although we yield
 To this her last invention little praise,
 Then know, that these her suitors will consume
 So long thy patrimony and thy goods,
 As she her present purpose shall indulge, 165
 With which the Gods inspire her. Great renown
 She to herself insures, but equal woe
 And devastation of thy wealth to thee ;
 For neither to our proper works at home
 Go we, of that be sure, nor yet elsewhere, 170
 Till him she wed, to whom she most inclines.

Him prudent, then, answer'd Telemachus.
 Antinoüs ! it is not possible
 That I should thrust her forth against her will,
 Who both produced and rear'd me. Be he dead, 175
 Or still alive, my Sire is far remote ;
 And should I, voluntary, hence dismiss
 My mother to Icarius, I must much
 Refund, which hardship were and loss to me.
 So doing, I should also wrath incur 180
 From my offended Sire, and from the Gods
 Still more ; for she, departing, would invoke
 Erynnis to avenge her, and reproach
 Beside would follow me from all mankind.
 That word I, therefore, never will pronounce. 185
 No ; if ye judge your treatment at her hands
 Injurious to you, go ye forth yourselves,

Your feasts ; consume your own ; alternate feed
 Each at the other's cost. But if it seem
 Wisest in your account and best to eat
 Voracious thus the patrimonial goods
 Of one man, rendering no account of all,
 Bite to the roots ; but know that I will cry
 Ceaseless to the eternal Gods in hope
 That Jove in retribution of the wrong,
 Shall doom you, where ye have intruded, there
 To bleed, and of your blood ask no account.

So spake Telemachus, and while he spake,
 The Thunderer from a lofty mountain-top
 Turn'd off two eagles ; on the winds, awhile,
 With outspread pinions ample side by side
 They floated ; but, ere long, hovering aloft,
 Right o'er the midst of the assembled Chiefs
 They wheel'd around, clang'd all their numerous plumes, 205
 And with a downward look eyeing the throng,
 Death boded, ominous ; then rending each
 The other's face and neck, they sprang at once
 Toward the right, and darted through the town.
 Amazement universal, at that sight, 210
 Seized the assembly, and with anxious thought
 Each scann'd the future ; amidst whom arose
 The Hero Halitherses, ancient Seer,
 Offspring of Mastor ; for in judgment he
 Of portents augural, and in forecast
 215
 Unerring, his coevals all excell'd,
 And prudent thus the multitude bespake.

Ye men of Ithaca, give ear ! hear all !
 Though chief my speech shall to the suitors look.
 For, on their heads devolved, comes down the woe. 220
 Ulysses shall not from his friends, henceforth,
 Live absent long, but, hastening to his home,
 Comes even now, and as he comes, designs
 A bloody death for these, whose bitter woes
 No few shall share, inhabitants with us
 225
 Of pleasant Ithaca ; but let us frame
 Effectual means maturely to suppress
 Their violent deeds, or rather let themselves
 Repentant cease ; and soonest shall be best.

Not inexpert, but well-inform'd I speak
 The future, and the accomplishment announce
 Of all which when Ulysses with the Greeks
 Embark'd for Troy, I to himself foretold.

I said that, after many woes, and loss
 Of all his people, in the twentieth year,
 Unknown to all, he should regain his home,
 And my prediction shall be now fulfill'd.

Him, then, Eurymachus thus answer'd rough
 The son of Polybus. Hence to thy house,
 Thou hoary dotard ! there, prophetic, teach
 Thy children to escape woes else to come.
 Birds numerous flutter in the beams of day,
 Not all predictive. Death, far hence remote
 Hath found Ulysses, and I would to heaven
 That, where he died, thyself had perish'd too :
 Thou hadst not then run o'er with prophecy
 As now, nor provocation to the wrath
 Given of Telemachus, in hope to win,
 Perchance, for thine some favour at his hands.
 But I to *thee* foretell, skill'd as thou art
 In legends old, (nor shall my threat be vain,)
 That if by artifice thou move to wrath
 A younger than thyself, no matter whom,
 Woe first the heavier on himself shall fall,
 Nor shalt thou profit him by thy attempt ;
 And we will charge thee also with a mullet,
 Which thou shalt pay with difficulty, and bear
 The burthen of it with an aching heart.

As for Telemachus, I him advise,
 Myself, and press the measure on his choice
 Earnestly, that he send his mother hence
 To her own father's house, who shall, himself,
 Set forth her nuptial rights, and shall endow
 His daughter sumptuously, and as he ought.
 For this expensive wooing, as I judge,
 Till then shall never cease ; since we regard
 No man—no—not Telemachus, although
 In words exuberant ; neither fear we aught
 Thy vain prognostics, venerable sir !
 But only hate thee for their sake the more.

230

235

240

245

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260

265

270

Waste will continue and disorder foul
 Unremedied, so long as she shall hold
 The suitors in suspense, for, day by day,
 Our emulation goads us to the strife,
 Nor shall we, going hence, seek to espouse
 Each his own consort suitable elsewhere.

275

To whom, discreet, Telemachus replied.
 Eurymachus, and ye the suitor train
 Illustrious, I have spoken ; ye shall hear
 No more this supplication urged by me.
 The Gods, and all the Greeks, now know the truth.

280

But give me instantly a gallant bark
 With twenty rowers, skill'd their course to win
 To whatsoever haven ; for I go

285

To sandy Pylus, and shall hasten thence
 To Lacedemon, tidings to obtain
 Of my long-absent Sire, or from the lips
 Of man, or by a word from Jove vouchsafed
 Himself, best source of notice to mankind.

290

If, there inform'd that still my father lives,
 I hope conceive of his return, although
 Distress'd, I shall be patient yet a year.
 But should I learn, haply, that he survives
 No longer, then, returning, I will raise
 At home his tomb, will with such pomp perform

295

His funeral rites, as his great name demands,
 And give my mother's hand to whom I may.

This said, he sat, and after him arose

Mentor, illustrious Ulysses' friend,
 To whom, embarking thence, he had consign'd
 All his concerns, that the old Chief might rule
 His family, and keep the whole secure.
 Arising, thus the senior, sage, began.

300

Hear me, ye Ithacans ! be never King
 Henceforth, benevolent, gracious, humane
 Or righteous, but let every sceptred hand
 Rule merciless, and deal in wrong alone,
 Since none of all his people, whom he sway'd
 With such paternal gentleness and love,
 Remembers the divine Ulysses more !

310

That the imperious suitors thus should weave

The web of mischief and atrocious wrong,
I grudge not ; since at hazard of their heads
They make Ulysses' property a prey,
Persuaded that the Hero comes no more.

315

But much the people move me ; how ye sit
All mute, and though a multitude, yourselves,
Opposed to few, risk not a single word
To check the licence of these bold intruders !

320

Then thus Liocritus, Evenor's son.

Injurious Mentor ! headlong orator !
How darest thou move the populace against
The suitors ? Trust me they should find it hard,
Numerous as they are, to cope with us,

325

A feast the prize. Or should the King himself
Of Ithaca, returning, undertake
To expel the jovial suitors from his house,
Much as Penelope his absence mourns,

His presence should afford her little joy ;
For fighting sole with many, he should meet
A dreadful death. Thou, therefore, speak'st amiss.

330

As for Telemachus, let Mentor him
And Halytherses furnish forth, the friends
Long valued of his Sire, with all dispatch ;
Though him I judge far likelier to remain
Long time contented an enquirer here,
Than to perform the voyage now proposed.

335

Thus saying, Liocritus dissolved in haste
The council, and the scatter'd concourse sought
Their several homes, while all the suitors flock'd
Thence to the palace of their absent King.
Meantime, Telemachus from all resort
Retiring, in the surf of the grey Deep
First laved his hands, then, thus to Pallas pray'd.

340

O Goddess ! who wast yesterday a guest
Beneath my roof, and didst enjoin me then
A voyage o'er the sable Deep in quest
Of tidings of my long-regretted Sire !
Which voyage, all in Ithaca, but most
The haughty suitors, obstinate impede,
Now hear my suit and gracious interpose !

350

Such prayer he made ; then Pallas, in the form,

And with the voice of Mentor, drawing nigh,
In accents wing'd, him kindly thus bespake.

Telemachus ! thou shalt hereafter prove 355
Nor base, nor poor in talents. If, in truth,

Thou have received from heaven thy father's force
Instill'd into thee, and resemblest him
In promptness both of action and of speech,

Thy voyage shall not useless be, or vain. 360
But if Penelope produced thee not

His son, I, then, hope not for good effect
Of this design which, ardent, thou pursuest.
Few sons their fathers equal ; most appear

Degenerate ; but we find, though rare, sometimes 365
A son superior even to his Sire.
And since thyself shalt neither base be found

Nor spiritless, nor altogether void

Of talents, such as grace thy royal Sire,
I therefore hope success of thy attempt. 370
Heed not the suitors' projects ; neither wise

Are they, nor just, nor aught suspect the doom
Which now approaches them, and in one day

Shall overwhelm them all. No long suspense
Shall hold thy purposed enterprize in doubt, 375

Such help from me, of old thy father's friend,
Thou shalt receive, who with a bark well-oar'd

Will serve thee, and myself attend thee forth.

But haste, join thou the suitors, and provide,

In separate vessels stow'd, all needful stores, 380
Wine in thy jars, and flour, the strength of man,
In skins close-seam'd. I will, meantime, select

Such as shall voluntary share thy toils.

In sea-girt Ithaca, new ships and old

Abound, and I will choose, myself, for thee

The prime of all, which without more delay

We will launch out into the spacious Deep.

Thus Pallas spake, daughter of Jove ; nor long,
So greeted by the voice divine, remain'd

Telemachus, but to his palace went 390
Distress'd in heart. He found the suitors there

Goats flaying in the hall, and fatted swine

Roasting ; when with a laugh Antinoüs flew

To meet him, fasten'd on his hand, and said.

Telemachus, in eloquence sublime,
And of a spirit not to be control'd !
Give harbour in thy breast on no account
To after-grudge or enmity, but eat,
Far rather, cheerfully as heretofore,

395

And freely drink, committing all thy cares
To the Achaians, who shall furnish forth
A gallant ship and chosen crew for thee,
That thou may'st hence to Pilus with all speed,
Tidings to learn of thy illustrious Sire.

400

To whom Telemachus, discreet, replied.

Antinoüs, I have no heart to feast
With guests so insolent, nor can indulge
The pleasures of a mind at ease, with you.
Is 't not enough, suitors, that ye have used
My noble patrimony as your own

405

While I was yet a child ? now, grown mature,
And competent to understand the speech
Of my instructors, feeling, too, a mind
Within me conscious of augmented powers,
I will attempt your ruin, be assured,

410

Whether at Pylus, or continuing here.

I go, indeed, (nor shall my voyage prove
Of which I speak, bootless or vain,) I go
An humble passenger, who neither bark
Nor rowers have to boast my own, denied
That honour (so ye judged it best) by you.

420

He said, and from Antinoüs' hand his own
Drew sudden. Then their delicate repast
The busy suitors on all sides prepared,
Still taunting as they toil'd, and with sharp speech
Sarcastic wantoning, of whom a youth,

425

Arrogant as his fellows, thus began.

I see it plain, Telemachus intends
Our slaughter ; either he will aids procure
From sandy Pylus, or will bring them arm'd
From Sparta ; such is his tremendous drift.
Even to fruitful Ephyre, perchance,
He will proceed, seeking some baneful herb
Which cast into our cup, shall drug us all.

430

To whom some haughty suitor thus replied. 435
 Who knows but that himself, wandering the sea
 From all his friends and kindred far remote,
 May perish like Ulysses ? Whence to us
 Should double toil ensue, on whom the charge
 To parcel out his wealth would then devolve, 440
 And to endow his mother with the house
 For his abode whom she should chance to wed.

So sported they ; but he, ascending, sought
 His father's lofty chamber, where his heaps
 He kept of brass and gold, garments in chests, 445
 And oils of fragrant scent, a copious store.
 There many a cask with season'd nectar fill'd
 The grape's pure juice divine, beside the wall
 Stood orderly arranged, waiting the hour
 (Should e'er such hour arrive) when, after woes 450
 Numerous, Ulysses should regain his home.
 Secure that chamber was with folding doors
 Of massy planks compact, and, night and day,
 Within it ancient Euryclea dwelt,
 Guardian discreet of all the treasures there, 455
 Whom, thither call'd, Telemachus address'd.

Nurse ! draw me forth sweet wine into my jars,
 Delicious next to that which thou reservest
 For our poor wanderer ; if escaping death
 At last, divine Ulysses e'er return. 460
 Fill twelve, and stop them close ; pour also meal
 Well-mill'd (full twenty measures) into skins
 Close-seam'd, and mention what thou dost to none.
 Place them together ; for at even-tide
 I will convey them hence, soon as the Queen, 465
 Retiring to her couch, shall seek repose.
 For hence to Sparta will I take my course,
 And sandy Pylus, tidings there to hear
 (If hear I may) of my loved Sire's return.
 He ceased ; then wept his gentle nurse that sound 470
 Hearing, and in wing'd accents thus replied.

My child ! ah, wherefore hath a thought so rash
 Possess'd thee ? whither, only and beloved,
 Seek'st thou to ramble, travelling, alas !
 To distant climes ? Ulysses is no more ; 475

Dead lies the hero in some land unknown,
And thou no sooner shalt depart, than these
Will plot to slay thee, and divide thy wealth.
No, stay with us who love thee. Need is none
That thou should'st on the barren Deep distress
Encounter, roaming without hope or end.

480

Whom, prudent, thus answer'd Telemachus.
Take courage, nurse! for not without consent
Of the Immortals I have thus resolved.
But swear, that till eleven days be past,
Or twelve, or till enquiry made, she learn
Herself my going, thou wilt nought impart
Of this my purpose to my mother's ear,
Lest all her beauties fade by grief impair'd.

485

He ended, and the ancient matron swore
Solemnly by the Gods; which done, she fill'd
With wine the vessels and the skins with meal,
And he, returning, join'd the throng below.

490

Then Pallas, Goddess azure-eyed, her thoughts
Elsewhere directing, all the city ranged
In semblance of Telemachus, each man
Exhorting, at the dusk of eve, to seek
The gallant ship, and from Noëmon, son
Renown'd of Phronius, ask'd, herself, a bark,
Which soon as ask'd, he promised to supply.

495

Now set the sun, and twilight dimm'd the ways,
When, drawing down his bark into the Deep,
He gave her all her furniture, oars, arms
And tackle, such as well-built galleys bear,
Then moor'd her in the bottom of the bay.
Meantime, his mariners in haste repair'd
Down to the shore, for Pallas urged them on.
And now, on other purposes intent,
The Goddess sought the palace, where with dews
Of slumber drenching every suitor's eye,
She fool'd the drunkard multitude, and dash'd
The goblets from their idle hands away.
They through the city reel'd, happy to leave
The dull carousal, when the slumberous weight
Oppressive on their eyelids once had fallen.
Next, Pallas azure-eyed in Mentor's form

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And with the voice of Mentor, summoning
Telemachus abroad, him thus bespake.

Telemachus ! already at their oars
Sit all thy fellow-voyagers, and wait
Thy coming ; linger not, but haste away.

This said, Minerva led him thence, whom he
With nimble steps follow'd, and, on the shore
Arrived, found all his mariners prepared,
Whom thus the princely voyager address'd.

Haste, my companions ! bring we down the stores
Already sorted, and set forth ; but nought
My mother knows, or any of her train
Of this design, one matron sole except.

He spake, and led them ; they obedient, brought
All down, and, as Ulysses' son enjoin'd,
Within the gallant bark the charge bestow'd.

Then, led by Pallas, went the prince on board,
Where down they sat, the Goddess in the stern,
And at her side Telemachus. The crew

Cast loose the hawsers, and embarking, fill'd
The benches. Blue eyed Pallas from the West
Call'd forth propitious breezes ; fresh they curl'd
The sable Deep, and, sounding, swept the waves.
He loud-exhorting them, his people bade

Hand, brisk, the tackle ; they, obedient, reared
The pine-tree mast, which in its socket deep
They lodged, then strain'd the cordage, and with thongs
Well-twisted, drew the shining sail aloft.

A land-breeze fill'd the canvas, and the flood
Roar'd as she went against the steady bark
That ran with even course her liquid way.

The rigging, thus, of all the galley set,
Their beakers crowning high with wine, they hail'd
The ever-living Gods, but above all
Minerva, daughter azure-eyed of Jove.

Thus, all night long the galley, and till dawn
Had brighten'd into day, cleaved swift the flood.

BOOK III.

ARGUMENT.

Telemachus arriving at Pylus, enquires of Nestor concerning Ulysses. Nestor relates to him all that he knows or has heard of the Grecians since their departure from the siege of Troy, but not being able to give him any satisfactory account of Ulysses, refers him to Menelaus. At evening Minerva quits Telemachus, but discovers herself in going. Nestor sacrifices to the Goddess, and the solemnity ended, Telemachus sets forth for Sparta in one of Nestor's chariots, and accompanied by Nestor's son Pisistratus.

THE sun, emerging from the lucid waves,
Ascended now the brazen vault with light
For the inhabitants of earth and heaven,
When in their bark at Pylus they arrived,
City of Neleus. On the shore they found
The people sacrificing ; bulls they slew
Black without spot, to Neptune azure-hair'd.
On ranges nine of seats they sat ; each range
Received five hundred, and to each they made
Allotment equal of nine sable bulls.

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The feast was now begun ; these eating sat
The entrails, those stood offering to the God
The thighs, his portion, when the Ithacans
Push'd right ashore, and, furling close the sails,
And making fast their moorings, disembark'd.

Forth came Telemachus by Pallas led,
Whom thus the Goddess azure-eyed address'd.

Telemachus ! there is no longer room
For bashful fear, since thou hast cross'd the flood
With purpose to enquire what land conceals

20

Thy father, and what fate hath follow'd him.
Advance at once to the equestrian Chief

Nestor, within whose bosom lies, perhaps,
Advice well worthy of thy search ; entreat
Himself, that he will tell thee only truth,
Who will not lie, for he is passing wise.

25

To whom Telemachus discreet replied.
 Ah Mentor ! how can I advance, how greet
 A Chief like him, unpractised as I am
 In managed phrase ? Shame bids the youth beware 30
 How he accosts the man of many years.

But him the Goddess answer'd azure-eyed.
 Telemachus ! Thou wilt, in part, thyself
 Fit speech devise, and Heaven will give the rest ;
 For thou wast neither born, nor hast been train'd 35
 To manhood, under unpropitious Powers.

So saying, Minerva led him thence, whom he
 With nimble steps attending, soon arrived
 Among the multitude. There Nestor sat,
 And Nestor's sons, while, busily the feast 40
 Tending, his numerous followers roasted some
 The viands, some transfix'd them with the spits.
 They seeing guests arrived, together all
 Advanced, and, grasping courteously their hands,
 Invited them to sit ; but first, the son 45
 Of Nestor, young Pisistratus, approach'd,
 Who, fastening on the hands of both, beside
 The banquet placed them, where the beach was spread
 With fleeces, and where Thrasymedes sat
 His brother, and the hoary Chief his Sire. 50
 To each, a portion of the inner parts
 He gave, then fill'd a golden cup with wine,
 Which, tasted first, he to the daughter bore
 Of Jove the Thunderer, and her thus bespeak.

Oh guest ! the King of Ocean now adore ! 55
 For ye have chanced on Neptune's festival ;
 And, when thou hast, thyself, libation made
 Duly and prayer, deliver to thy friend
 The generous juice, that he may also make
 Libation ; for he, doubtless, seeks in prayer 60
 The Immortals, of whose favour all have need.
 But, since he younger is, and with myself
 Coeval, first I give the cup to thee.

He ceased, and to her hand consign'd the cup,
 Which Pallas gladly from a youth received
 So just and wise, who to herself had first
 The golden cup presented, and in prayer 65

Fervent the Sovereign of the Seas adored.

Hear, earth-encircler Neptune ! O vouchsafe
To us thy suppliants the desired effect
Of this our voyage ; glory, first, bestow
On Nestor and his offspring both, then grant
To all the Plians such a gracious boon
As shall requite their noble offering well.

Grant also to Telemachus and me
To voyage hence, possess'd of what we sought
When hither in our sable bark we came.

So Pallas pray'd, and her own prayer herself
Accomplish'd. To Telemachus she gave
The splendid goblet next, and in his turn
Like prayer Ulysses' son also preferr'd.
And now (the banquet from the spits withdrawn)
They next distributed sufficient share
To each, and all were sumptuously regaled.
At length (both hunger satisfied and thirst)
Thus Nestor, the Gerenian Chief, began.

Now with more seemliness we may enquire,
After repast, what guests we have received.
Our guests ! who are ye ? Whence have ye the waves
Plough'd hither ? Come ye to transact concerns
Commercial, or at random roam the Deep
Like pirates, who with mischief charged and woe
To foreign States, oft hazard life themselves ?

Him answer'd, bolder now, but still discreet,
Telemachus : for Pallas had his heart
With manly courage arm'd, that he might ask
From Nestor tidings of his absent Sire,
And win himself distinction and renown.

Oh Nestor, Neleus' son, glory of Greece !
Thou askest whence we are. I tell thee whence.
From Ithaca, by the umbrageous woods
Of Neritus o'erhung, by private need,
Not public, urged, we come. My errand is
To seek intelligence of the renown'd
Ulysses ; of my noble father, praised
For dauntless courage, whom report proclaims
Conqueror, with thine aid, of sacred Troy.
We have already learn'd where other Chiefs

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Who fought at Ilium, died ; but Jove conceals
Even the death of my illustrious Sire. 110

In dull obscurity ; for none hath heard
Or confident can answer, where he died ;
Whether he on the continent hath fallen
By hostile hands, or by the waves o'erwhelm'd
Of Amphitrite, welters in the Deep. 115

For this cause, at thy knees suppliant, I beg
That thou wouldest tell me his disastrous end,
If either thou beheld'st that dread event
Thyself, or from some wanderer of the Greeks
Hast heard it ; for my father at his birth 120

Was, sure, predestined to no common woes.
Neither through pity, or o'erstrain'd respect
Flatter me, but explicit all relate
Which thou hast witness'd. If my noble Sire
E'er gratified thee by performance just 125

Of word or deed at Ilium, where ye fell
So numerous slain in fight, oh, recollect
Now his fidelity, and tell me true.

Then Nestor thus Gerenian Hero old.
Young friend ! since thou remind'st me, speaking thus, 130
Of all the woes which indefatigable
We sons of the Achaians there sustain'd,
Both those which wandering on the Deep we bore
Wherever by Achilles led in quest
Of booty, and the many woes beside 135

Which under royal Priam's spacious walls
We suffer'd, know, that there our bravest fell.
There warlike Ajax lies, there Peleus' son ;
There, too, Patroclus, like the Gods themselves
In council ; and my son beloved there, 140

Brave, virtuous, swift of foot, and bold in fight,
Antilochus. Nor are these sorrows all ;
What tongue of mortal man could all relate ?
Should'st thou, abiding here, five years employ
Or six enquiring of the woes endured 145

By the Achaians, ere thou should'st have learn'd
The whole, thou wouldest depart, tired of the tale.
For we, nine years, stratagems of all kinds
Devised against them, and Saturnian Jove

Scarce crown'd the difficult attempt at last.
There no competitor in wiles well-plann'd
Ulysses found, so far were all surpass'd
In shrewd invention by thy noble Sire—
If thou indeed art his, as sure thou art,
Whose sight breeds wonders in me, and thy speech
His speech resembles more than might be deem'd
Within the scope of years so green as thine. 150

There, never in opinion, or in voice
Illustrious Ulysses and myself
Divided were, but one in heart, contrived
As best we might, the benefit of all.
But after Priam's lofty city sack'd,
And the departure of the Greeks on board
Their barks, and when the Gods had scatter'd them,
Then Jove imagined for the Argive host 160

A sorrowful return ; for neither just
Were all, nor prudent, therefore many found
A fate disastrous through the vengeful ire
Of Jove-born Pallas, who between the sons
Of Atreus sharp contention interposed. 165

They both, irregularly, and against
Just order, summoning by night the Greeks
To council, of whom many came with wine
Oppress'd, promulgated the cause for which
They had convened the people. Then it was 170

That Menelaus bade the general host
Their thoughts bend homeward o'er the sacred Deep,
Which Agamemnon in no sort approved.
His counsel was to stay them yet at Troy,
That so he might assuage the dreadful wrath 175

Of Pallas, first, by sacrifice and prayer.
Vain hope ! he little thought how ill should speed
That fond attempt, for, once provoked, the Gods
Are not with ease conciliated again.
Thus stood the brothers, altercation hot 180

Maintaining, till at length uprose the Greeks
With deafening clamours, and with differing minds.
We slept the night, but teeming with disgust
Mutual, for Jove great woe prepared for all.
At dawn of day we drew our gallies down 185

190

Into the sea, and hasty put on board
 The spoils and female captives. Half the host,
 With Agamemnon, son of Atreus, stay'd
 Supreme commander, and embarking half
 Push'd forth. Swift course we made, for Neptune smooth'd 195
 The waves before us of the monstrous Deep.
 At Tenedos arrived, we there perform'd
 Saerifice to the Gods, ardent to reach
 Our native land, but unpropitious Jove,
 Not yet designing our arrival there, 200
 Involved us in dissension fierce again.
 For all the crews, followers of the King,
 Thy noble sire, to gratify our Chief,
 The son of Atreus, chose a different course,
 And steer'd their oary barks again to Troy. 205
 But I, assured that evil from the Gods
 Impended, gathering all my gallant fleet,
 Fled thence in haste, and warlike Diomede
 Exhorting his attendants, also fled.
 At length, the Hero Menelaus join'd 210
 Our fleets at Lesbos ; there he found us held
 In deep deliberation on the length
 Of way before us, whether we should steer
 Above the craggy Chios to the isle
 Psyria, that island holding on our left, 215
 Or under Chios by the wind-swept heights
 Of Mimas. Then we ask'd from Jove a sign,
 And by a sign vouchsafed he bade us cut
 The wide sea to Eubœa sheer athwart,
 So soonest to escape the threaten'd harm. 220
 Shrill sang the rising gale, and with swift prows
 Cleaving the fishy flood, we reach'd by night
 Geræstus, where arrived, we burn'd the thighs
 Of numerous bulls to Neptune, who had safe
 Conducted us through all our perilous course. 225
 The fleet of Diomede in safety moor'd
 On the fourth day at Argos, but myself
 Held on my course to Pylus, nor the wind
 One moment thwarted us, or died away,
 When Jove had once commanded it to blow. 230
 Thus, uninform'd, I have arrived, my son !

Nor of the Grecians, who are saved have heard,
Or who have perish'd ; but what news soe'er
I have obtain'd since my return, with truth
I will relate, nor aught conceal from thee.

235

The spear-famed Myrmidons, as rumour speaks,
By Neoptolemus, illustrious son

Of brave Achilles led, have safe arrived ;

Safe, Philoctetes also, son renown'd

Of Pæas : and Idomeneus at Crete

240

Hath landed all his followers who survive

The bloody war, the waves have swallow'd none.

Ye have yourselves doubtless, although remote,

Of Agamemnon heard, how he return'd,

And how Ægisthus cruelly contriv'd

245

For him a bloody welcome, but himself

Hath with his own life paid the murderous deed.

Good is it therefore if a son survive

The slain, since Agamemnon's son hath well

250

Avenged his father's death, slaying, himself,

Ægisthus, foul assassin of his Sire.

Young friend ! (for pleased thy vigorous youth I view,

And just proportion,) be thou also bold,

That thine like his may be a deathless name.

Then, prudent, him answer'd Telemachus.

255

Oh Nestor, Neleus' son, glory of Greece !

And righteous was that vengeance ; *his* renown

Achaia's sons shall far and wide diffuse,

To future times transmitting it in song.

Ah ! would that such ability the Gods

260

Would grant to me, that I, as well, the deeds

Might punish of our suitors, whose excess

Enormous, and whose bitter taunts I feel

Continual, object of their subtle hate.

But not for me such happiness the Gods

265

Have twined into my thread ; no, not for me

Or for my father. Patience is our part.

To whom Gerenian Nestor thus replied.

Young friend ! (since thou remind'st me of that theme)

Fame here reports that numerous suitors haunt

270

Thy palace for thy mother's sake, and there

Much evil perpetrate in thy despite.

But, say, endur'st thou willing their control
 Imperious, or because the people sway'd
 By some response oracular, incline 275
 Against thee? But who knows? the time may come
 When to his home restored, either alone,
 Or aided by the force of all the Greeks,
 Ulysses may avenge the wrong; at least,
 Should Pallas azure-eyed thee love, as erst 280
 At Troy the scene of our unnumber'd woes,
 She loved Ulysses; (for I have not known
 The Gods assisting so apparently
 A mortal man, as him Minerva there;)
 Should Pallas view thee also with like love 285
 And kind solicitude, some few of those
 Should dream perchance of wedlock never more.

Then answer thus Telemachus return'd.
 That word's accomplishment I cannot hope;
 It promises too much; the thought alone 290
 O'erwhelms me; an event so fortunate
 Would, unexpected on my part, arrive,
 Although the Gods themselves should purpose it.

But Pallas him answer'd cœrulean-eyed.
 Telemachus! what word was that which leap'd 295
 The ivory¹ guard that should have fenced it in?
 A God, so willing, could with utmost ease
 Save any man, howe'er remote. Myself,
 I had much rather, many woes endured,
 Revisit home at last happy and safe, 300
 Than, sooner coming, die in my own house,
 As Agamemnon perish'd by the arts
 Of base Ægisthus and the subtle Queen.
 Yet not the Gods themselves can save from death
 All-levelling, the man whom most they love, 305
 When Fate ordains him once to his last sleep.

To whom Telemachus, discreet, replied.
 Howe'er it interest us, let us leave
 This question, Mentor! He, I am assured.

¹ Ερκος οδοντων. Prior, alluding to this expression, ludicrously renders it

“When words like these in vocal breath
 Burst from his twofold hedge of teeth.”

Returns no more, but hath already found
 A sad, sad fate by the decree of Heaven.
 But I would now interrogate again
 Nestor, and on a different theme, for him
 In human rights I judge and laws expert,
 And in all knowledge beyond other men ;
 For he hath govern'd, as report proclaims,
 Three generations ; therefore in my eyes
 He wears the awful impress of a God.

310

Oh Nestor, son of Neleus, tell me true ;
 What was the matter of Atrides' death,
 Wide-ruling Agamemnon ? Tell me where
 Was Menelaus ? By what means contrived
 \mathbb{A} gisthus to inflict the fatal blow,
 Slaying so much a nobler than himself ?
 Had not the brother of the Monarch reach'd
 Achaian Argos yet, but, wandering still
 In other climes, by his long absence gave
 \mathbb{A} gisthus courage for that bloody deed ?

320

Whom answer'd the Gerenian Chief renown'd.

My son ! I will inform thee true ; meantime
 Thy own suspicions border on the fact.

330

Had Menelaus, Hero amber-hair'd,
 \mathbb{A} gisthus found living at his return
 From Ilium, never on *his* bones the Greeks

335

Had heap'd a tomb, but dogs and ravening fowls
 Had torn him lying in the open field

Far from the town, nor him had woman wept
 Of all in Greece, for he had foul transgress'd.

But we in many an arduous task engaged,

Lay before Ilium ; he, the while, secure

340

Within the green retreats of Argos, found

Occasion apt by flattery to delude

The spouse of Agamemnon ; she, at first,

(The royal Clytemnestra) firm refused

The deed dishonourable ; (for she bore

A virtuous mind, and at her side a bard

Attended ever, whom the King, to Troy

Departing, had appointed to the charge.)

But when the Gods had purposed to ensnare

\mathbb{A} gisthus, then dismissing far remote

345

350

The bard into a desert isle, he there
 Abandon'd him to ravening fowls a prey,
 And to his own home, willing as himself
 Led Clytemnestra. Numerous thighs he burn'd
 On all their hallow'd altars to the Gods, 355
 And hung with tapestry, images, and gold
 Their shrines, his great exploit past hope achieved.
 We (Menelaus and myself) had sailed
 From Troy together, but when we approach'd
 Sunium, headland of the Athenian shore, 360
 There Phœbus, sudden, with his gentle shafts
 Slew Menelaus' pilot while he steer'd
 The volant bark, Phrontis, Onetor's son,
 A mariner past all expert, whom none
 In steerage match'd, what time the tempest roar'd. 365
 Here therefore Menelaus was detain'd,
 Giving his friend due burial, and his rites
 Funereal celebrating, though in haste
 Still to proceed. But when, with all his fleet
 The wide sea traversing, he reach'd at length
 Malea's lofty foreland in his course, 370
 Rough passage, then, and perilous he found.
 Shrill blasts the Thunderer pour'd into his sails,
 And wild waves sent him mountainous. His ships
 There scatter'd, some to the Cydonian coast
 Of Crete he push'd, near where the Jardan flows. 375
 Beside the confines of Gortyna stands,
 Amid the gloomy flood, a smooth rock, steep
 Toward the sea, against whose leftward point,
 Phæstus by name, the South wind rolls the surge
 Amain, which yet the rock, though small, repels. 380
 Hither with part he came, and scarce the crews
 Themselves escaped, while the huge billows broke
 Their ships against the rocks ; yet five he saved,
 Which winds and waves drove to the Egyptian shore. 385
 Thus he, provision gathering as he went
 And gold abundant, roam'd to distant lands
 And nations of another tongue. Meantime,
 Ægisthus, these enormities at home
 Devising, slew Atrides, and supreme
 Ruled the subjected land ; seven years he reign'd 390

In opulent Mycenæ, but the eighth
 From Athens brought renown'd Orestes home
 For his destruction, who of life bereaved
 Ægisthus, base assassin of his Sire.

395

Orestes, therefore, the funereal rites
 Performing to his shameless mother's shade
 And to her lustful paramour, a feast
 Gave to the Argives; on which self-same day
 The warlike Menelaus, with his ships
 All treasure-laden to the brink, arrived.

400

And thou, young friend! from thy forsaken home
 Rove not long time remote, thy treasures left
 At mercy of those proud, lest they divide
 And waste the whole, rendering thy voyage vain.
 But hence to Menelaus is the course
 To which I counsel thee; for he hath come
 Of late from distant lands, whence to escape
 No man could hope, whom tempests first had driven
 Devious into so wide a sea, from which
 Themselves the birds of heaven could not arrive
 In a whole year, so vast is the expanse.
 Go, then, with ship and shipmates, or if more
 The land delight thee, steeds thou shalt not want
 Nor chariot, and my sons shall be thy guides
 To noble Lacedemon, the abode
 Of Menelaus; ask from him the truth,
 Who will not lie, for he is passing wise.

410

While thus he spake, the sun declined and night
 Approaching, blue-eyed Pallas interposed.

420

Oh ancient King! well hast thou spoken all.
 But now delay not. Cut² ye forth the tongues,
 And mingle wine, that (Neptune first invoked
 With due libation, and the other Gods)
 We may repair to rest; for even now
 The sun is sunk, and it becomes us not
 Long to protract a banquet to the Gods
 Devote, but in fit season to depart.

425

² It is said to have been customary in the days of Homer, when the Greeks retired from a banquet to their beds, to cut out the tongues of the victims, and offer them to the Gods in particular who presided over conversation.

So spake Jove's daughter ; they obedient heard.
 The heralds then pour'd water on their hands, 430
 And the attendant youths, filling the cups,
 Served them from left to right. Next all the tongues
 They cast into the fire, and every guest
 Arising, pour'd libation to the Gods.
 Libation made, and all with wine sufficed, 435
 Godlike Telemachus and Pallas both
 Would have return'd incontinent on board,
 But Nestor urged them still to be his guests.

Forbid it, Jove, and all the Powers of heaven !
 That ye should leave me to repair on board 440
 Your vessel, as I were some needy wretch
 Cloakless and destitute of fleecy stores
 Wherewith to spread the couch soft for myself,
 Or for my guests. No. I have garments warm
 An ample store, and rugs of richest dye ; 445
 And never shall Ulysses' son beloved,
 My friend's own son, sleep on a galley's plank
 While I draw vital air ; grant also, Heaven,
 That, dying, I may leave behind me sons
 Glad to accommodate whatever guest ! 450

Him answer'd then Pallas coerulean-eyed.
 Old Chief ! thou hast well said, and reason bids
 Telemachus thy kind commands obey.
 Let *him* attend thee hence, that he may sleep
 Beneath thy roof, but I return on board 455
 Myself to instruct my people, and to give
 All needful orders ; for among them none
 Is old as I, but they are youths alike,
 Coevals of Telemachus, with whom
 They have embark'd for friendship's sake alone. 460
 I therefore will repose myself on board
 This night, and to the Caucons bold in arms
 Will sail to-morrow to demand arrears
 Long time unpaid, and of no small amount.
 But, since he has become thy guest, afford 465
 My friend a chariot, and a son of thine
 Who shall direct his way, nor let him want
 Of all thy steeds the swiftest and the best.
 So saying, the blue-eyed Goddess as upborne

On eagles' wings, vanish'd : amazement seized
The whole assembly, and the ancient King
O'erwhelm'd with wonder at that sight, the hand
Grasp'd of Telemachus, whom he thus bespake.

My friend ! I prophecy that thou shalt prove
Nor base, nor dastard, whom, so young, the Gods
Already take in charge ; for of the Powers
Inhabitants of Heaven, none else was this
Than Jove's own daughter Pallas, who among
The Grecians honour'd most thy generous Sire.
But thou, O Queen ! compassionate us all,
Myself, my sons, my consort ; give to each
A glorious name, and I to thee will give
For sacrifice an heifer of the year,
Broad-fronted, one that never yet hath borne
The yoke, and will incase her horns with gold.

So Nestor pray'd, whom Pallas gracious heard.
Then the Gerenian warrior old, before
His sons and sons-in-law, to his abode
Magnificent proceeded ; they (arrived
Within the splendid palace of the King)
On thrones and couches sat in order ranged,
Whom Nestor welcomed, charging high the cup
With wine of richest sort, which she who kept
That treasure, now in the eleventh year
First broach'd, unsealing the delicious juice.
With this the hoary Senior fill'd a cup,
And to the daughter of Joye aegis-arm'd
Pouring libation, offer'd fervent prayer.

When all had made libation, and no wish
Remain'd of more, then each to rest retired,
And Nestor the Gerenian warrior old
Led thence Telemachus to a carved couch
Beneath the sounding portico prepared.
Beside him he bade sleep the spearman bold,
Pisistratus, a gallant youth, the sole
Unwedded in his house of all his sons.
Himself in the interior palace lay,
Where couch and covering for her ancient spouse
The consort Queen had diligent prepared.

But when Aurora, daughter of the dawn,

470

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510

Had tinged the East, arising from his bed,
Gerenian Nestor issued forth, and sat
Before his palace-gate on the white stones
Resplendent as with oil, on which of old
His father Neleus had been wont to sit, 515
In council like a God ; but he had sought,
By destiny dismiss'd long since, the shades.
On those stones therefore now, Nestor himself,
Achaia's guardian, sat, sceptre in hand,
Where soon his numerous sons, leaving betimes 520
The place of their repose, also appeared,
Echephron, Stratius, Perseus, Thrasymedes,
Aretus and Pisistratus. They placed
Godlike Telemachus at Nestor's side,
And the Gerenian Hero thus began. 525

Sons, be ye quick,—execute with dispatch
My purpose, that I may propitiate first
Of all the Gods Minerva, who herself
Hath honour'd manifest our hallowed feast.
Haste, one, into the field, to order thence 530
An ox, and let the herdsman drive it home.
Another, hastening to the sable bark
Of brave Telemachus, bring hither all
His friends, save two, and let a third command
Laerceus, that he come to enwrap with gold 535
The victim's horns. Abide ye here, the rest,
And bid my female train (for I intend
A banquet,) with all diligence provide
Seats, stores of wood, and water from the rock.

He said, whom instant all obey'd. The ox
Came from the field, and from the gallant ship
The ship-mates of the brave Telemachus ;
Next, charged with all his implements of art,
His mallet, anvil, pincers, came the smith 540
To give the horns their gilding ; also came
Pallas herself to her own sacred rites.
Then Nestor, hoary warrior, furnish'd gold,
Which, hammer'd thin, the artist wrapp'd around
The victim's horns, that seeing him attired
So costly, Pallas might the more be pleased. 550
Stratius and brave Echephron introduced

The victim by his horns ; Aretus brought
 A laver, in one hand, with flowers emboss'd,
 And in his other hand a basket stored
 With cakes, while warlike Thrasymedes, arm'd
 With his long-hafted axe, prepared to smite
 The ox, and Perseus to receive the blood.
 The hoary Nestor consecrated first
 Both cakes and water, and with earnest prayer
 To Pallas, gave the forelock to the flames.

555

When all had worshipp'd, and the broken cakes
 Sprinkled, then godlike Thrasymedes drew
 Close to the ox, and smote him. Deep the edge
 Enter'd, and senseless on the floor he fell.

560

Then Nestor's daughters, and the consorts all
 Of Nestor's sons, with his own consort, chaste
 Eurydice, the daughter eldest-born
 Of Clymenus, in one shrill orison

565

Vociferous join'd, while they, lifting the ox,
 Held him supported firmly, and the prince
 Of men, Pisistratus, his gullet pierced.

570

Soon as the sable blood had ceased, and life
 Had left the victim, spreading him abroad,
 With nice address they parted at the joint.

His thighs, and wrapp'd them in the double caul,
 Which with crude slices thin they overspread.

575

Nestor burn'd incense, and libation pour'd
 Large on the hissing brands, while, him beside,
 Busy with spit and prong, stood many a youth
 Train'd to the task. The thighs consumed, each took
 His portion of the maw, then, slashing well
 The remnant, they transpierced it with the spits
 Neatly, and held it reeking at the fire.

580

Meantime the youngest of the daughters fair
 Of Nestor, beauteous Polycaste, laved,

585

Anointed, and in vest and tunic clothed
 Telemachus, who, so refresh'd, stepp'd forth
 From the bright laver graceful as a God,
 And took his seat at ancient Nestor's side.

The viands dress'd, and from the spits withdrawn,
 They sat to share the feast, and princely youths
 Arising, gave them wine in cups of gold.

590

When neither hunger now nor thirst remain'd
Unsated, thus Gerenian Nestor spake.

My sons, arise ! lead forth the sprightly steeds,
And yoke them, that Telemachus may go.

So spake the Chief, to whose command his sons,
Obedient, yoked in haste the rapid steeds,
And the intendant matron of the stores
Disposed meantime within the chariot, bread
And wine, with dainties, such as princes eat.
Telemachus into the chariot first

Ascended, and beside him, next, his place
Pisistratus the son of Nestor took,
Then seized the reins, and lash'd the coursers on.
They, nothing loth, into the open plain
Flew, leaving lofty Pylus soon afar.

Thus, journeying, they shook on either side
The yoke all day ; and now the setting sun
To dusky evening had resign'd the roads,
When they to Pheræ came, and the abode
Reach'd of Diocles, whose illustrious Sire
Orsilochus from Alpheus drew his birth,
And there, with kindness entertain'd, they slept.

But when Aurora, daughter of the dawn,
Look'd rosy from the East, yoking the steeds,
They in their sumptuous chariot sat again.
The son of Nestor plied the lash, and forth
Through vestibule and sounding portico
The royal coursers, not unwilling, flew.
A corn-invested land received them next,
And there they brought their journey to a close,
So rapidly they moved ; and now the sun
Went down, and even-tide dimm'd all the ways.

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BOOK IV.

A R G U M E N T.

Telemachus, with Pisistratus, arrives at the palace of Menelaus, from whom he receives some fresh information concerning the return of the Grecians, and is in particular told, on the authority of Proteus, that his father is detained by Calypso. The suitors, plotting against the life of Telemachus, lie in wait to intercept him in his return to Ithaca. Penelope, being informed of his departure, and of their designs to slay him, becomes inconsolable, but is relieved by a dream sent to her from Minerva.

IN hollow Lacedæmon's spacious vale
 Arriving, to the house they drove direct
 Of royal Menelaus; him they found
 In his own palace, all his numerous friends
 Regaling at a nuptial banquet given
 Both for his daughter and the prince his son.
 His daughter to renown'd Achilles' heir
 He sent, to whom he had at Troy engaged
 To give her, and the Gods now made her his.
 With chariots and with steeds he sent her forth
 To the illustrious city where the prince,
 Achilles' offspring, ruled the Myrmidons.
 But to his son he gave a Spartan fair,
 Alector's daughter; from an handmaid sprang
 That son to Menelaus in his age,
 Brave Megapenthes; for the Gods no child
 To Helen gave, made mother, once, of her
 Who vied in perfect loveliness of form
 With golden Venus' self, Hermione.

Thus all the neighbour princes and the friends
 Of noble Menelaus, feasting sat
 Within his spacious palace, among whom
 A sacred bard sang sweetly to his harp,
 While, in the midst, two dancers smote the ground
 With measured steps responsive to his song.

And now the Heroes, Nestor's noble son
 And young Telemachus, arrived within

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The vestibule, whom issuing from the hall,
The noble Eteoneus of the train
Of Menelaus, saw ; at once he ran 30
Across the palace to report the news
To his Lord's ear, and standing at his side,
In accents wing'd with haste thus greeted him.
 Oh Menelaus ! Heaven-descended Chief !
Two guests arrive, both strangers, but the race
Of Jove supreme resembling each in form. 35
Say, shall we loose, ourselves, their rapid steeds,
Or hence dismiss them to some other host ?
 But Menelaus, Hero golden-hair'd,
Indignant answer'd him. Boethe's son ! 40
Thou wast not, Eteoneus, heretofore,
A babbler, who now protest as a child.
We have ourselves arrived indebted much
To hospitality of other men,
If Jove shall, even here, some pause at last 45
Of woe afford us. Therefore loose, at once,
Their steeds, and introduce them to the feast.
 He said, and issuing, Eteoneus call'd
The brisk attendants to his aid, with whom
He loosed their foaming coursers from the yoke. 50
Them first they bound to mangers, which with oats
And mingled barley they supplied, then thrust
The chariot sidelong to the splendid wall.¹
Themselves he, next, into the royal house
Conducted, who survey'd, wondering, the abode 55
Of the heaven-favour'd King ; for on all sides
As with the splendour of the sun or moon
The lofty dome of Menelaus blazed.
Satiate, at length, with wonder at that sight,
They enter'd each a bath, and by the hands 60
Of maidens laved, and oil'd, and clothed again
With shaggy mantles and resplendent vests,
Sat both enthroned at Menelaus' side.
And now a maiden charged with golden ewer,
And with an argent laver, pouring first 65
Pure water on their hands, supplied them next,

¹ Hesychius tells us, that the Grecians ornamented with much attention the front wall of their courts for the admiration of passengers.

With a bright table, which the maiden, chief
In office, furnish'd plenteously with bread
And dainties, remnants of the last regale.

Then came the sewer, who with delicious meats
Dish after dish, served them, and placed beside
The chargers cups magnificent of gold,
When Menelaus grasp'd their hands, and said.

Eat and rejoice, and when ye shall have shared
Our nuptial banquet, we will, then, enquire
Who are ye both ; for, certain, not from those
Whose generation perishes are ye,
But rather of some race of sceptred Chiefs
Heaven-born ; the base have never sons like you.

So saying, he from the board lifted his own
Distinguish'd portion, and the fatted chine
Gave to his guests ; the savoury viands they
With outstretch'd hands assail'd, and when the force
No longer now of appetite they felt,
Telemachus, inclining close his head
To Nestor's son, lest others should his speech
Witness, in whisper'd words him thus address'd.

Dearest Pisistratus, observe, my friend !
How all the echoing palace with the light
Of beaming brass, of gold and amber shines
Silver and ivory ! for radiance such
The interior mansion of Olympian Jove
I deem. What wealth, how various, how immense
Is here ! astonish'd I survey the sight !

But Menelaus, golden-hair'd, his speech
O'erhearing, thus in accents wing'd replied.

My children ! let no mortal man pretend
Comparison with Jove ; for Jove's abode
And all his stores are incorruptible.

But whether mortal man with me may vie
In the display of wealth, or whether not,
This know, that after many toils endured,
And perilous wanderings wide, in the eighth year
I brought my treasures home. Remote I roved
To Cyprus, to Phœnix, to the shores
Of Egypt ; Æthiopia's land I reach'd,
Th' Erembi, the Sidonians, and the coasts

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Of Libya, where the lambs their foreheads show
At once with horns defended, soon as yean'd.
There, thrice within the year the flocks produce,
Nor master, there, nor shepherd ever feels
A dearth of cheese, of flesh, or of sweet milk
Delicious, drawn from udders never dry.
While, thus, commodities on various coasts
Gathering I roam'd, another, by the arts
Of his pernicious spouse aided, of life
Bereaved my brother privily, and when least
He fear'd to lose it. Therefore little joy
To me results from all that I possess.

Your fathers (be those fathers who they may,) 120
These things have doubtless told you ; for immense
Have been my sufferings, and I have destroy'd
A palace well inhabited and stored
With precious furniture of every kind ;
Such, that I would to heaven ! I own'd at home 125
Though but the third of it, and that the Greeks
Who perish'd then, beneath the walls of Troy
Far from steed-pastured Argos, still survived.
Yet while, sequester'd here, I frequent mourn
My slaughter'd friends, by turns I soothe my soul 130
With tears shed for them, and by turns again
I cease ; for grief soon satiates free indulged.
But of them all, although I all bewail,
None mourn I so as one, whom calling back
To memory, I both sleep and food abhor. 135

For, of Achaia's sons none ever toil'd
Strenuous as Ulysses ; but his lot
Was woe, and unremitting sorrow mine
For his long absence, who, if still he live,
We know not aught, or be already dead. 140

Him doubtless, old Laertes mourns, and him
Discreet Penelope, nor less his son
Telemachus, born newly when he sail'd.
So saying, he kindled in him strong desire
To mourn his father ; at his father's name 145
Fast fell his tears to ground, and with both hands
He spread his purple cloak before his eyes ;
Which Menelaus marking, doubtful sat

If he should leave him leisure for his tears,
Or question him, and tell him all at large.

150

While thus he doubted, Helen (as it chanced)
Leaving her fragrant chamber, came, august
As Dian, goddess of the golden bow.
Adrasta, for her use, set forth a throne,
Alcippe with soft arras cover'd it,
And Philo brought her silver basket, gift
Of fair Alcandra, wife of Polybus,
Whose mansion in Egyptian Thebes is rich
In untold treasure, and who gave, himself,
Ten golden talents, and two silver baths
To Menelaus, with two splendid tripods,
Beside the noble gifts which, at the hand
Of his illustrious spouse, Helen received ;
A golden spindle, and a basket wheel'd,
Itself of silver, and its lip of gold.

160

That basket Philo, her own handmaid, placed
At beauteous Helen's side, charged to the brim
With slender threads, on which the spindle lay
With wool of purple lustre wrapp'd around.
Approaching, on her foot-stool'd throne she sat,
And, instant, of her royal spouse enquired.

170

Know we, my Menelaus, dear to Jove !
These guests of ours, and whence they have arrived ?
Erroneous I may speak, yet speak I must ;
In man or woman never have I seen
Such likeness to another, (wonder-fixt
I gaze,) as in this stranger to the son
Of brave Ulysses, whom that Hero left
New-born at home, when (shameless as I was)
For my unworthy sake the Grecians sail'd
To Ilium with fierce rage of battle fired.

175

Then Menelaus, thus, the golden-hair'd.
I also such resemblance find in him
As thou ; such feet, such hands, the cast² of eye
Similar, and the head and flowing locks.
And even now, when I Ulysses named,
And his great sufferings mention'd, in my cause,
The bitter tear dropp'd from his lids, while broad

180

185

Before his eyes his purple cloak he spread.
 To whom the son of Nestor thus replied. 190
 Atrides ! Menelaus ! Chief renown'd !
 He is in truth his son, as thou hast said ;
 But he is modest, and would much himself
 Condemn, if, at his first arrival here,
 He should loquacious seem and bold to thee,
 To whom we listen, captived by thy voice,
 As if some God had spoken. As for me,
 Nestor, my father, the Gerenian Chief
 Bade me conduct him hither, for he wish'd
 To see thee, promising himself from thee
 The benefit of some kind word or deed.
 For, destitute of other aid, he much
 His father's tedious absence mourns at home.
 So fares Telemachus ; his father strays
 Remote, and in his stead, no friend hath he
 Who might avert the mischiefs that he feels. 205

To whom the Hero amber-hair'd replied.
 Ye Gods ! the offspring of indeed a friend
 Hath reach'd my house, of one who hath endured
 Arduous conflicts numerous for my sake ;
 And much I purposed, had Olympian Jove
 Vouchsafed us prosperous passage o'er the Deep,
 To have received him with such friendship here
 As none beside. In Argos I had then
 Founded a city for him, and had raised
 A palace for himself ; I would have brought
 The Hero hither, and his son, with all
 His people, and with all his wealth, some town
 Evacuating for his sake, of those
 Ruled by myself, and neighbouring close my own. 215
 Thus situate, we had often interchanged
 Sweet converse, nor had other cause at last
 Our friendship terminated or our joys,
 Than death's black cloud o'ershadowing him or me.
 But such delights could only envy move
 Even in the Gods, who have, of all the Greeks,
 Amerced *him* only of his wish'd return. 225

So saying, he kindled the desire to weep
 In every bosom. Argive Helen wept

Abundant, Jove's own daughter ; wept as fast
Telemachus and Menelaus, both ;
Nor Nestor's son with tearless eyes remain'd,
Calling to mind Antilochus³ by the son⁴
Illustrious of the bright Aurora slain,
Remembering whom, in accents wing'd he said.

230

Atrides ! ancient Nestor, when of late
Conversing with him, we remember'd thee,
Pronounc'd thee wise beyond all human-kind.
Now therefore, let not even my advice
Displease thee. It affords me no delight
To intermingle tears with my repast,
And soon, Aurora, daughter of the dawn,
Will tinge the orient. Not that I account
Due lamentation of a friend deceased
Blameworthy, since, to shear the locks and weep,
Is all we can for the unhappy dead.
I also have my grief, call'd to lament
One, not the meanest of Achaia's sons,
My brother, him I cannot but suppose
To thee well-known, although unknown to me
Who saw him never⁵ ; but report proclaims
Antilochus superior to the most,
In speed superior, and in feats of arms.

240

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250

To whom, the Hero of the yellow locks.
O friend beloved ! since nought which thou hast said
Or recommended now, would have disgraced
A man of years maturer far than thine,
(For wise thy father is, and such art thou,
And easy is it to discern the son
Of such a father, whom Saturnian Jove
In marriage both and at his birth ordain'd
To great felicity ; for he hath given
To Nestor gradually to sink at home
Into old age, and while he lives, to see
His sons past others wise, and skill'd in arms,) 260
The sorrow into which we sudden fell
Shall pause. Come—now remember we the feast ;

265

³ Antilochus was his brother.

⁴ The son of Aurora, who slew Antilochus, was Memnon.

⁵ Because Pisistratus was born after Antilochus had sailed to Troy.

Pour water on our hands, for we shall find
(Telemachus and I) no dearth of themes
For mutual converse when the day shall dawn. 270

He ended ; then, Asphalion, at his word,
Servant of glorious Menelaus, pour'd
Pure water on their hands, and they the feast
Before them with keen appetite assail'd.
But Jove-born Helen otherwise, meantime,
Employ'd, into the wine of which they drank
A drug infused, antidote to the pains
Of grief and anger, a most potent charm
For ills of every name. Whoe'er his wine
So medicated drinks, he shall not pour
All day the tears down his wan cheek, although
His father and his mother both were dead,
Nor even though his brother or his son
Had fallen in battle, and before his eyes.
Such drugs Jove's daughter own'd, with skill prepared, 285
And of prime virtue, by the wife of Thone,
Egyptian Polydamma, given her.
For Egypt teems with drugs, yielding no few
Which, mingled with the drink, are good, and many
Of baneful juice, and enemies to life. 290
There every man in skill medicinal
Excels, for they are sons of Paeon all.
That drug infused, she bade her servant pour
The beverage forth, and thus her speech resumed.
Atrides ! Menelaus ! dear to Jove ! 295
These also are the sons of Chiefs renown'd,
(For Jove, as pleases him, to each assigns
Or good or evil, whom all things obey,)
Now therefore, feasting at your ease reclined,
Listen with pleasure, for myself, the while, 300
Will matter seasonable interpose.
I cannot all rehearse, nor even name
(Omitting none) the conflicts and exploits
Of brave Ulysses ; but with what address
Successful, one achievement he perform'd
At Ilium, where Achaia's sons endured
Such hardship, will I speak. Inflicting wounds
Dishonourable on himself, he took 305

A tatter'd garb, and like a serving-man
Enter'd the spacious city of your foes. 310
So veil'd, some mendicant he seem'd, although
No 'Grecian less deserved that name than he.
In such disguise he entered ; all alike
Misdeem'd him ; me alone he not deceived
Who challenged him, but, shrewd, he turn'd away. 315
At length, however, when I had myself
Bathed him, anointed, cloth'd him, and had sworn
Not to declare him openly in Troy
Till he should reach again the camp and fleet,
He told me the whole purpose of the Greeks. 320
Then, (many a Trojan slaughter'd,) he regain'd
The camp, and much intelligence he bore
To the Achaians. Oh, what wailing then
Was heard of Trojan women ! but my heart
Exulted, alter'd now, and wishing home ; 325
For now my crime committed under force
Of Venus' influence I deplored, what time
She led me to a country far remote,
A wanderer from the matrimonial bed,
From my own child, and from my rightful Lord 330
Alike unblemish'd both in form and mind.

Her answer'd then the Hero golden-hair'd
Helen ! thou hast well spoken. All is true.
I have the talents fathom'd and the minds
Of numerous Heroes, and have travell'd far, 335
Yet never saw I with these eyes in man
Such firmness as the calm Ulysses own'd ;
None such as in the wooden horse he proved,
Where all our bravest sat, designing woe
And bloody havoc for the sons of Troy. 340
Thou thither camest, impell'd, as it should seem,
By some divinity inclined to give
Victory to our foes, and with thee came
Godlike Deiphobus. Thrice round about
The hollow ambush, striking with thy hand 345
Its sides thou went'st, and by his name didst call
Each prince of Greece, feigning his consort's voice.
Myself with Diomede, and with divine
Ulysses, seated in the midst, the call

Heard plain and loud ; we (Diomede and I)
With ardour burn'd either to quit the horse
So summon'd, or to answer from within.
But, all impatient as we were, Ulysses
Control'd the rash design ; so there the sons
Of the Achaians silent sat and mute,
And of us all Anticlus would alone
Have answer'd ; but Ulysses, with both hands
Compressing close his lips, saved us, nor ceased
Till Pallas thence conducted thee again.

Then thus, discreet, Telemachus replied.
Atrides ! Menelaus ! prince renown'd !
Hard was his lot, whom these rare qualities
Preserved not, neither had his dauntless heart
Been iron, had he 'scaped his cruel doom.
But haste, dismiss us hence, that on our beds
Reposed, we may enjoy sleep, needful now.

He ceased ; then Argive Helen gave command
To her attendant maidens to prepare
Beds in the portico with purple rugs
Resplendent, and with arras, overspread,
And cover'd warm with cloaks of shaggy pile.
Forth went the maidens, bearing each a torch,
And spread the couches ; next, the herald them
Led forth, and in the vestibule the son
Of Nestor and the youthful hero slept,
Telemachus ; but in the interior house
Atrides, with the loveliest of her sex
Beside him, Helen of the sweeping stole.
But when Aurora, daughter of the dawn,
Glow'd in the East, then from his couch arose
The warlike Menelaus, fresh attired ;
His faulchion o'er his shoulders slung, he bound
His sandals fair to his unsullied feet,
And like a God issuing, at the side
Sat of Telemachus, to whom he spake.

Hero ! Telemachus ! what urgent cause
Hath hither led thee, to the land far-famed
Of Lacedæmon o'er the spacious Deep ?
Public concern or private ? Tell me true.
To whom Telemachus discreet replied.

Atrides ! Menelaus ! prince renown'd !
 News seeking of my Sire, I have arrived.
 My household is devour'd, my fruitful fields
 Are desolated, and my palace fill'd
 With enemies, who while they mutual wage
 Proud competition for my mother's love,
 My flocks continual slaughter, and my beeves.
 For this cause, at thy knees suppliant, I beg
 That thou wouldst tell me his disastrous end,
 If either thou beheld'st with thine own eyes
 His death, or from some wanderer of the Greeks
 Hast heard it ; for no common woes, alas !
 Was he ordain'd to share even from the womb.
 Neither through pity or o'erstrain'd respect
 Flatter me, but explicit all relate

395

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Which thou hast witness'd. If my noble Sire
 E'er gratified thee by performance just
 Of word or deed at Ilium, where ye fell
 So numerous slain in fight, oh recollect
 Now his fidelity, and tell me true !

410

Then Menelaus, sighing deep, replied.
 Gods ! their ambition is to reach the bed
 Of a brave man, however base themselves.
 But as it chances, when the hart hath laid
 Her fawns new-yean'd and sucklings yet, to rest
 Within some dreadful lion's gloomy den,
 She roams the hills, and in the grassy vales
 Feeds heedless, till the lion, to his lair
 Return'd, destroys her and her little-ones,
 So them thy Sire shall terribly destroy.

415

Jove, Pallas and Apollo ! oh that such
 As erst in well-built Lesbos, where he strove
 With Philomelides, and threw him flat,
 A sight at which Achaia's sons rejoiced,
 Such, now, Ulysses might assail them all !
 Short life and bitter nuptials should be theirs.
 But thy enquiries neither indirect
 Will I evade, nor give thee false reply,
 But all that from the Ancient⁶ of the Deep
 I have received will utter, hiding nought.

420

425

430

As yet the Gods on Egypt's shore detain'd
 Me wishing home, angry at my neglect
 To heap their altars with slain hecatombs :
 For they exacted from us evermore
 Strict reverence of their laws. There is an isle 435
 Amid the billowy flood, Pharos by name,
 In front of Egypt, distant from her shore
 Far as a vessel by a sprightly gale
 Impell'd, may push her voyage in a day.
 The haven there is good, and many a ship 440
 Finds watering there from rivulets on the coast.
 There me the Gods kept twenty days, no breeze
 Propitious granting, that might sweep the waves,
 And usher to her home the flying bark.
 And now had our provision, all consumed, 445
 Left us exhausted, but a certain nymph
 Pitying saved me. Daughter fair was she
 Of mighty Proteus, Ancient of the Deep,
 Idothea named ; her most my sorrows moved ;
 She found me from my followers all apart 450
 Wandering, (for they around the isle, with hooks
 The fishes snaring roam'd, by famine urged,)
 And standing at my side, me thus bespake.
 Stranger ! thou must be idiot born, or weak
 At least in intellect, or thy delight 455
 Is in distress and misery, who delay'st
 To leave this island, and no egress hence
 Canst find, although thy famish'd people faint.
 So spake the Goddess, and I thus replied.
 I tell thee, whosoever of the Powers 460
 Divine thou art, that I am prison'd here
 Not willingly, but must have, doubtless, sinn'd
 Against the deathless tenants of the skies.
 Yet say (for the Immortals all things know,)
 What God detains me, and my course forbids 465
 Hence to my country o'er the fishy Deep ?
 So I ; to whom the Goddess all divine.
 Stranger ! I will inform thee true. A seer
 Oracular, the Ancient of the Deep,
 Immortal Proteus, the Egyptian, haunts 470
 These shores, familiar with all Ocean's gulfs,

And Neptune's subject. He is by report
 My father ; him if thou art able once
 To seize and bind, he will prescribe the course
 With all its measured distances, by which
 Thou shalt regain secure thy native shores.
 He will, moreover, at thy suit declare,
 Thou favour'd of the skies ! what good, what ill
 Hath in thine house befallen, while absent thou
 Thy voyage difficult perform'st and long.

475

She spake, and I replied,—Thyself reveal
 By what effectual bands I may secure
 The ancient Deity marine, lest, warn'd
 Of my approach, he shun me and escape.
 Hard task for mortal hands to bind a God !

480

485

Then thus Idothea answer'd all-divine.
 I will inform thee true. Soon as the sun
 Hath climb'd the middle heavens, the prophet old,
 Emerging while the breezy zephyr blows,
 And cover'd with the scum of ocean, seeks
 His spacious cove, in which outstretch'd he lies.
 The phocæ⁷ also, rising from the waves,
 Offspring of beauteous Halosydna, sleep
 Around him, numerous, and the fishy scent
 Exhaling rank of the unfathom'd flood.
 Thither conducting thee at peep of day
 I will dispose thee in some safe recess,
 But from among thy followers thou shalt choose
 The bravest three in all thy gallant fleet.
 And now the artifices understand

490

495

Of the old prophet of the sea. The sum
 Of all his phocæ numbering duly first,
 He will pass through them, and when all by fives
 He counted hath, will in the midst repose
 Content, as sleeps the shepherd with his flock.
 When ye shall see him stretch'd, then call to mind
 That moment all your prowess, and prevent,
 Howe'er he strive impatient, his escape.
 All changes trying, he will take the form
 Of every reptile on the earth, will seem
 A river now, and now devouring fire ;

500

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510

⁷ Seals, or sea-calves.

But hold him ye, and grasp him still the more.
 And when himself shall question you, restored
 To his own form in which ye found him first
 Reposing, then from farther force abstain ;
 Then, Hero ! loose the Ancient of the Deep,
 And ask him, of the Gods who checks thy course
 Hence to thy country o'er the fishy flood.

515

So saying, she plunged into the billowy waste.

I then, in various musings lost, my ships
 Along the sea-beach station'd sought again,
 And when I reach'd my galley on the shore
 We supp'd, and sacred night falling from heaven,
 Slept all extended on the ocean-side.

520

But when Aurora, daughter of the dawn,
 Look'd rosy forth, pensive beside the shore
 I walk'd of Ocean, frequent to the Gods
 Praying devout, then chose the fittest three
 For bold assault, and worthiest of my trust.

525

Meantime the Goddess from the bosom wide
 Of Ocean rising, brought us thence four skins
 Of phocæ, and all newly-stript, a snare
 Contriving subtle to deceive her Sire.

530

Four cradles in the sand she scoop'd, then sat
 Expecting us, who in due time approach'd ;
 She lodged us side by side, and over each
 A raw skin cast. Horrible to ourselves
 Proved that disguise, whom the pernicious scent
 Of the sea-nourish'd phocæ sore annoy'd ;
 For who would lay him down at a whale's side ?

535

But she a potent remedy devised
 Herself to save us, who the nostrils soothed
 Of each with pure ambrosia thither brought
 Odorous, which the fishy scent subdued.

540

All morning, patient watchers, there we lay ;
 And now the numerous phocæ from the Deep
 Emerging, slept along the shore, and he
 At noon came also, and perceiving there
 His fatted monsters, through the flock his course
 Took regular, and summ'd them ; with the first
 He number'd us, suspicion none of fraud
 Conceiving, then couch'd also. We, at once,

545

550

Loud-shouting flew on him, and in our arms
Constrain'd him fast; nor the sea-prophet old
Call'd not incontinent his shifts to mind.

555

First he became a long-maned lion grim,
Then dragon, panther then, a savage boar,
A limpid stream, and an o'ershadowing tree.
We persevering held him, till at length
The Ancient of the Deep, skill'd as he is
In wiles, yet weary, question'd me, and said.

560

'Oh Atreus' son, by what confederate God
Instructed liest thou in wait for me,
To seize and hold me? what is thy desire?

So He; to whom thus answer I return'd.

565

Old Seer! thou know'st; why, fraudulent, shouldst thou ask?
It is because I have been prison'd long
Within this isle, whence I have sought in vain
Deliverance, till my wonted courage fails.
Yet say (for the Immortals all things know,) 570
What God detains me, and my course forbids
Hence to my country o'er the fishy Deep?

So I; when thus the old one of the waves.

*But thy plain duty was to have adored
Jove, first, in sacrifice, and all the Gods,
That then embarking, by propitious gales
Impell'd, thou might'st have reach'd thy country soon.
For thou art doom'd ne'er to behold again
Thy friends, thy palace, or thy native shores,
Till thou have seen once more the hallow'd flood
Of Egypt, and with hecatombs adored
Devout the deathless tenants of the skies.
Then will they speed thee whither thou desirest.

575

He ended, and my heart broke at his words,
Which bade me pass again the gloomy gulf
To Egypt; tedious course, and hard to achieve!
Yet, though in sorrow whelm'd, I thus replied.

580

Old prophet! I will all thy will perform.
But tell me, and the truth simply reveal;

⁸ From the abruptness of this beginning, Virgil, probably, who has copied the story, took the hint of his admired exordium.

*Nam quis te, juvenum confidentissime, nostras
Egit adire domos?*

Have the Achaians with their ships arrived
All safe, whom Nestor left and I, at Troy ?
Or of the Chiefs have any in their barks,
Or in their followers' arms found a dire death
Unlook'd for, since that city's siege we closed ?

590

I spake, when answer thus the God return'd.
Atrides, why these questions ? need is none
That thou should'st all my secrets learn, which once
Reveal'd, thou wouldest not long dry-eyed remain.
Of those no few have died, and many live ;
But leaders, two alone, in their return
Have died, (thou also hast had war to wage,)
And one, still living, roams the boundless sea.

600

Ajax⁹, surrounded by his galleys, died.
Him Neptune, first, against the bulky rocks
The Gyræ drove, but saved him from the Deep ;

605

Nor had he perish'd, hated as he was
By Pallas, but for his own impious boast
In frenzy utter'd, that he would escape
The billows, even in the Gods' despite.

Neptune that speech vain-glorious hearing, grasp'd
His trident, and the huge Gyræan rock
Smiting indignant, dash'd it half away ;

610

Part stood, and part, on which the boaster sat
When, first, the brainsick fury seized him, fell,
Bearing him with it down into the gulfs
Of Ocean, where he drank the brine, and died.

615

But thy own brother in his barks escaped
That fate, by Juno saved ; yet when, at length,
He should have gain'd Malea's craggy shore,
Then, by a sudden tempest caught, he flew

620

With many a groan far o'er the fishy Deep
To the land's utmost point, where once his home
Thyestes had, but where Thyestes' son
Dwelt then, Ægisthus. Easy lay his course
And open thence, and as it pleased the Gods,
The shifted wind soon bore them to their home.

625

He high in exultation, trod the shore
That gave him birth, kiss'd it, and at the sight,
The welcome sight of Greece, shed many a tear.

Yet not unseen he landed ; for a spy,
One whom the shrewd *E*gisthus had seduced
By promise of two golden talents, mark'd
His coming from a rock where he had watch'd
The year complete, lest passing unperceived,
The King should reassert his right in arms.
Swift flew the spy with tidings to his Lord,
And He, incontinent, this project framed
Insidious. Twenty men, the boldest hearts
Of all the people, from the rest he chose,
Whom he in ambush placed, and others charged
Diligent to prepare the festal board.

630

With horses, then, and chariots forth he drove
Full-fraught with mischief, and conducting home
The unsuspecting King, amid the feast
Slew him, as at his crib men slay an ox.
Nor of thy brother's train, nor of his train
Who slew thy brother, one survived, but all,
Weltering in blood together, there expired.

645

He ended, and his words beat on my heart
As they would break it. On the sands I sat
Weeping, nor life nor light desiring more.
But when I had in dust roll'd me, and wept
To full satiety, mine ear again
The oracle of Ocean thus address'd.

650

Sit not, O son of Atreus ! weeping here
Longer, for remedy can none be found ;
But quick arising, trial make, how best
Thou shalt, and soonest, reach thy home again.
For either him still living thou shalt find,
Or ere thou come, Orestes shall have slain
The traitor, and thine eyes shall see his tomb.

655

He ceased, and I, afflicted as I was,
Yet felt my spirit at that word refresh'd,
And in wing'd accents answer thus return'd.

660

Of these I am inform'd ; but name the third
Who dead or living, on the boundless Deep
Is still detain'd ; I dread, yet wish to hear.

665

So I ; to whom thus Proteus in return.
Laertes' son, the Lord of Ithaca—
Him in an island weeping I beheld,

670

Guest of the nymph Calypso, by constraint
 Her guest, and from his native land withheld
 By sad necessity ; for ships well-oar'd,
 Or faithful followers hath he none, whose aid
 Might speed him safely o'er the spacious flood. 675
 But, Menelaus dear to Jove ! thy fate
 Ordains not thee the stroke of death to meet
 In steed-famed Argos, but far hence the Gods
 Will send thee to Elysium, and the earth's
 Extremest bounds ; (there Rhadamanthus dwells,
 The golden-hair'd, and there the human kind
 Enjoy the easiest life ; no snow is there,
 No biting winter, and no drenching shower,
 But zephyr always gently from the sea
 Breathes on them, to refresh the happy race ;)
 For that fair Helen is by nuptial bands
 Thy own, and thou art son-in-law of Jove. 685
 So saying, he plunged into the billowy waste.
 I then, with my brave comrades to the fleet
 Return'd, deep-musing as I went, and sad. 690
 No sooner had I reach'd my ship beside
 The ocean, and we all had supped, than night
 From heaven fell on us, and at ease reposed
 Along the margin of the sea, we slept.
 But when Aurora, daughter of the dawn,
 Look'd rosy forth, drawing our galleys down
 Into the sacred Deep, we rear'd again
 The mast, unfurl'd the sail, and to our seats
 On board returning, thresh'd the foamy flood.
 Once more, at length, within the hallow'd stream
 Of Egypt mooring, on the shore I slew
 Whole hecatombs, and (the displeasure thus
 Of the Immortal Gods appeased,) I rear'd
 To Agamemnon's never-dying fame
 A tomb, and finishing it sail'd again 705
 With such a gale from heaven vouchsafed, as sent
 My ships swift scudding to the shores of Greece.
 But come—eleven days wait here or twelve
 A guest with me, when I will send thee hence
 Nobly and honour'd with illustrious gifts,
 With polish'd chariot, with three princely steeds,
 710

And with a gorgeous cup, that to the Gods
Libation pouring ever while thou livest
From that same cup, thou may'st remember me.

Him, prudent, then answered Telemachus.

Atrides seek not to detain me here
Long time ; for though contented I could sit
The year beside thee, nor regret my home
Or parents (so delightful thy discourse
Sounds in my ear,) yet, even now, I know,
That my attendants to the Pylian shore
Wish my return, whom thou thus long detain'st.
What boon soe'er thou givest me, be it such
As I may treasured keep ; but horses none
Take I to Ithaca ; them rather far

715

Keep thou, for thy own glory. Thou art Lord
Of an extended plain, where copious springs
The lotus, herbage of all savours, wheat,
Pulse, and white barley of luxuriant growth.

725

But Ithaca no level champaign owns,
A nursery of goats, and yet a land
Fairer than even pastures to the eye.
No sea-encircled isle of ours affords
Smooth course commodious, and expanse of meads,
But my own Ithaca transcends them all !

730

He said ; the Hero Menelaus smiled,
And stroking tenderly his cheek, replied.
Dear youth ! thy speech proclaims thy noble blood.
I can with ease supply thee from within

735

With what shall suit thee better, and the gift
Of all that I possess which most excels
In beauty, and the noblest shall be thine.
I give thee, wrought elaborate, a cup
Itself all silver, bound with lip of gold.
It is the work of Vulcan, which to me
The Hero Phædimus imparted, King
Of the Sidonians, when on my return
His house received me. That shall be thy own.

740

Thus they conferr'd ; and now the busy train
Of ¹⁰menials culinary at the gate

750

¹⁰ Δαιτυμων—generally signifies the founder of a feast ; but we are taught by Eustathius to understand by it, in this place, the persons employed in preparing it.

Enter'd of Menelaus, Chief renown'd ;
 They brought him sheep, with heart-ennobling wine,
 While all their wives, their brows with frontlets bound,
 Came charged with bread. Thus busy they prepared
 A banquet in the mansion of the King.

755

Meantime, before Ulysses' palace gate
 The suitors sported with the quoit and spear
 On the smooth area, customary scene
 Of all their strife and angry clamour loud.
 There sat Antinoüs, and the godlike youth
 Eurymachus, superior to the rest
 And Chiefs among them, to whom Phronius' son
 Noëmon drawing nigh, with anxious mien
 Question'd Antinoüs, and thus began.

760

Know we, Antinoüs ! or know we not,
 When to expect Telemachus at home
 Again from Pylus ? In my ship he went,
 Which now I need, that I may cross the sea
 To Elis, on whose spacious plain I feed
 Twelve mares, each suckling a mule-colt as yet
 Unbroken, but of which I purpose one
 To ferry thence, and break him into use.

770

He spake, whom they astonish'd heard ; for him
 They deem'd not to Nelëian Pylus gone,
 But haply into his own fields, his flocks
 To visit, or the steward of his swine.
 Then thus Eupithe's son, Antinoüs, spake.

775

Say true. When sail'd he forth ? of all our youth,
 Whom chose he for his followers ? his own train
 Of slaves and hirelings ? hath he power to effect
 This also ? Tell me too, for I would learn—
 Took he perforce thy sable bark away,
 Or gavest it to him at his first demand ?

780

To whom Noëmon, Phronius' son, replied.
 I gave it voluntary ; what could'st thou,
 Should such a prince petition for thy bark
 In such distress ? Hard were it to refuse.
 Brave youths (our bravest youths except yourselves),
 Attend him forth ; and with them I observed
 Mentor embarking, ruler o'er them all,
 Or, if not him, a God ; for such he seem'd.

785

790

But this much moves my wonder. Yester-morn
I saw, at day-break, noble Mentor here,
Whom shipp'd for Pylus I had seen before.

He ceased; and to his father's house return'd;
They, hearing, sat aghast. Their games meantime
Finish'd, the suitors on their seats repos'd,
To whom Eupithe's son, Antinoüs, next,
Much troubled spake; a black storm overcharged
His bosom, and his vivid eyes flash'd fire.

Ye Gods, a proud exploit is here achieved,
This voyage of Telemachus, by us
Pronounced impracticable; yet the boy,
In downright opposition to us all,

Hath headlong launch'd a ship, and with a band
Selected from our bravest youth, is gone.

He soon will prove more mischievous, whose power
Jove wither, ere we suffer its effects!

But give me a swift bark with twenty rowers,
That, watching his return within the straits
Of rocky Samos and of Ithaca,
I may surprise him; so shall he have sail'd
To seek his sire, fatally for himself.

He ceased, and loud applause heard in reply,
With warm encouragement. Then, rising all,
Into Ulysses' house at once they throng'd.

Nor was Penelope left uninform'd
Long time of their clandestine plottings deep,
For herald Medon told her all, whose ear
Their councils caught while in the outer-court
He stood, and they that project framed within.
Swift to Penelope the tale he bore,
Who as he pass'd the gate him thus address'd.

For what cause, herald! have the suitors sent
Thee foremost? Would they that my maidens lay
Their tasks aside, and dress the board for them?
Here end their wooing! may they hence depart
Never, and may the banquet now prepared,
This banquet prove your¹¹ last! who in such throngs

¹¹ This transition from the third to the second person belongs to the original, and is considered as a fine stroke of art in the poet, who represents Penelope, in the warmth of her resentment, forgetting where she is, and addressing the suitors as if present.

795

800

805

810

815

820

825

Here meeting, waste the patrimony fair
830
Of brave Telemachus ; ye never, sure,
When children, heard how gracious and how good
Ulysses dwelt among your parents, none
Of all his people, or in word or deed
Injuring as great princes oft are wont,
835
By favour influenced now, now by disgust.
He no man wrong'd at any time ; but plain
Your wicked purpose in your deeds appears,
Who sense have none of benefits conferr'd.

Then Medon answer thus, prudent, return'd.
840
Oh Queen ! may the Gods grant this prove the worst.
But greater far and heavier ills than this
The suitors plan, whose counsels Jove confound !
Their base desire and purpose are to slay
Telemachus on his return ; for he,
845
To gather tidings of his Sire, is gone
To Pylus, or to Sparta's land divine.

He said ; and where she stood, her trembling knees
Fail'd under her, and all her spirits went.
Speechless she long remain'd, tears fill'd her eyes,
850
And inarticulate in its passage died
Her utterance, till at last with pain she spake.

Herald ! why went my son ? he hath no need
On board swift ships to ride, which are to man
His steeds that bear him over seas remote.
855
Went he, that, with himself, his very name
Might perish from among mankind for ever ?

Then answer, thus, Medon the wise return'd.
I know not whether him some God impell'd
Or his own heart to Pylus, there to hear
860
News of his Sire's return, or by what fate
At least he died, if he return no more.

He said, and traversing Ulysses' courts,
Departed ; she, with heart-consuming woe
O'erwhelm'd, no longer could endure to take
865
Repose on any of her numerous seats,
But on the threshold of her chamber-door
Lamenting sat, while all her female train
Around her moan'd, the ancient and the young,
Whom, sobbing, thus Penelope bespake.
870

Hear me, ye maidens! for of women born
 Coeval with me, none hath e'er received
 Such plenteous sorrow from the Gods as I,
 Who first my noble husband lost, endued
 With courage lion-like, of all the Greeks
 The Chief with every virtue most adorn'd,
 A prince all-excellent, whose glorious praise
 Through Hellas and all Argos flew diffused.
 And now, my darling son,—him storms have snatch'd
 Far hence inglorious, and I knew it not.

875

880

Ah, treacherous servants! conscious as ye were
 Of his design, not one of you the thought
 Conceived to wake me when he went on board.
 For had but the report once reach'd my ear,
 He either had not gone (how much soe'er
 He wish'd to leave me,) or had left me dead.
 But haste ye,—bid my ancient servant come,
 Dolion (whom when I left my father's house
 He gave me, and whose office is to attend
 My numerous garden-plants,) that he may seek
 At once Laertes, and may tell him all,
 Who may contrive some remedy, perchance,
 Or fit expedient, and shall come abroad
 To weep before the men who wish to slay
 Even the prince, godlike Ulysses' son.

885

890

895

Then thus the gentle Euryclea spake, *
 Nurse of Telemachus. Alas! my Queen!
 Slay me, or spare, deal with me as thou wilt,
 I will confess the truth. I knew it all.
 I gave him all that he required from me,
 Both wine and bread, and at his bidding, swore
 To tell thee nought in twelve whole days to come,
 Or till, enquiry made, thou should'st thyself
 Learn his departure, lest thou should'st impair
 Thy lovely features with excess of grief.
 But lave thyself, and fresh attired, ascend
 To thy own chamber, there, with all thy train,
 To worship Pallas, who shall save, thenceforth,
 Thy son from death, what ills soe'er he meet.
 Add not fresh sorrows to the present woes
 Of the old King, for I believe not yet

900

905

910

Arcesias' race entirely by the Gods
 Renounced, but trust that there shall still be found
 Among them, who shall dwell in royal state,
 And reap the fruits of fertile fields remote. 915

So saying, she hush'd her sorrow, and her eyes
 No longer stream'd. Then, bathed and fresh attired,
 Penelope ascended with her train
 The upper palace, and a basket stored
 With hallow'd cakes offering, to Pallas pray'd. 920

Hear, matchless daughter of Jove ægis-arm'd !
 If ever wise Ulysses offer'd here
 The thighs of fatted kine or sheep to thee,
 Now mindful of his piety, preserve
 His darling son, and frustrate with a frown
 The cruelty of these imperious guests ! 925

She said, and wept aloud, whose earnest suit
 Pallas received. And now the spacious hall
 And gloomy passages with tumult rang
 And clamour of that throng, when thus a youth,
 Insolent as his fellows, dared to speak. 930

Much woo'd and long, the Queen at length prepares
 To choose another mate¹², and nought suspects
 The bloody death to which her son is doom'd.

So he ; but they, meantime, themselves remain'd
 Untaught, what course the dread concern elsewhere
 Had taken, whom Antinoüs thus address'd.

Sirs ; one and all, I counsel you, beware
 Of such bold boasting unadvised ; lest one
 O'erhearing you, report your words within.
 No—rather thus, in silence, let us move
 To an exploit so pleasant to us all.

He said, and twenty chose, the bravest there,
 With whom he sought the galley on the shore,
 Which drawing down into the Deep, they placed
 The mast and sails on board, and fitting, next,
 Each oar in order to its proper groove,
 Unfurl'd and spread their canvas to the gale.
 Their bold attendants, then, brought them their arms,
 And soon as in deep water they had moor'd 950

¹² Mistaking, perhaps, the sound of her voice, and imagining that she sang.—Vide Barnes in loco.

The ship, themselves embarking, supp'd on board,
And watch'd impatient for the dusk of eve.

But when Penelope, the palace stairs
Remounting, had her upper chamber reach'd,
There, unrefresh'd with either food or wine,
She laid her down, her noble son the theme
Of all her thoughts, whether he should escape
His haughty foes, or perish by their hands.
Numerous as are the lion's thoughts, who sees,
Not without fear, a multitude with toils
Encircling him around, such numerous thoughts
Her bosom occupied, till sleep at length
Invading her, she sank in soft repose.

Then Pallas, teeming with a new design,
Set forth an airy phantom in the form
Of fair Iphthima, daughter of the brave
Icarius, and Eumelus' wedded wife
In Phœreæ. Shaped like her the dream she sent
Into the mansion of the godlike Chief
Ulysses, with kind purpose to abate
The sighs and tears of sad Penelope.
Entering the chamber-portal, where the bolt
Secured it, at her head the image stood,
And thus, in terms compassionate, began.

Sleep'st thou, distress'd Penelope ? The Gods,
Happy in everlasting rest themselves,
Forbid thy sorrows. Thou shalt yet behold
Thy son again, who hath by no offence
Incurr'd at any time the wrath of heaven.

To whom, sweet-slumbering in the shadowy gate
By which dreams pass, Penelope replied.

What cause, my sister, brings thee, who art seen
Unfrequent here, for that thou dwell'st remote ?
And thou enjoin'st me a cessation too
From sorrows numerous, and which, fretting, wear
My heart continual ; first, my spouse I lost,
With courage lion-like endow'd, a prince
All-excellent, whose never-dying praise
Through Hellas and all Argos flew diffused ;
And now my only son, new to the toils
And hazards of the sea, nor less untaught

955

960

965

970

975

980

985

990

The arts of traffic, in a ship is gone
 Far hence, for whose dear cause I sorrow more
 Than for his Sire himself, and even shake
 With terror, lest he perish by their hands
 To whom he goes, or in the stormy Deep ;
 For numerous are his foes, and all intent
 To slay him, ere he reach his home again.

995

Then answer thus the shadowy form return'd.
 Take courage ; suffer not excessive dread
 To overwhelm thee, such a guide he hath
 And guardian, one whom many wish their friend,
 And ever at their side, knowing her power,
 Minerva ; she compassionates thy griefs,
 And I am here, her harbinger, who speak
 As thou hast heard by her own kind command.

1000

Then thus Penelope the wise replied.
 Oh ! if thou art a Goddess, and hast heard
 A Goddess' voice, rehearse to me the lot
 Of that unhappy one, if yet he live
 Spectator of the cheerful beams of day,
 Or if, already dead, he dwell below.

1005

Whom answer'd thus the fleeting shadow vain.
 I will not now inform thee if thy Lord
 Live, or live not. Vain words are best unspoken.

1010

So saying, her egress swift beside the bolt
 She made, and melted into air. Upsprang
 From sleep Icarius' daughter, and her heart
 Felt heal'd within her, by that dream distinct
 Visited in the noiseless night serene.

1015

Meantime the suitors urged their watery way,
 To instant death devoting in their hearts
 Telemachus. There is a rocky isle
 In the mid sea, Samos the rude between
 And Ithaca, not large, named Asteris.
 It hath commodious havens into which
 A passage clear opens on either side,
 And there the ambush'd Greeks his coming watch'd.

1025

BOOK V.

ARGUMENT.

Mercury bears to Calypso a command from Jupiter that she dismiss Ulysses. She, after some remonstrances, promises obedience, and furnishes him with implements and materials, with which he constructs a raft. He quits Calypso's island; is persecuted by Neptune with dreadful tempests, but by the assistance of a sea nymph, after having lost his raft, is enabled to swim to Phæacia.

AURORA from beside her glorious mate
Tithonus now arose, light to dispense
Through earth and heaven, when the assembled Gods
In council sat, o'er whom high-thundering Jove
Presided, mightiest of the powers above. 5
Amid them, Pallas on the numerous woes
Descanted of Ulysses, whom she saw
With grief, still prison'd in Calypso's isle.

Jove, Father, hear me, and ye other Powers
Who live for ever, hear! Be never King 10
Henceforth to gracious acts inclined, humane,
Or righteous, but let every sceptred hand
Rule merciless, and deal in wrong alone,
Since none of all his people whom he sway'd
With such paternal gentleness and love 15
Remembers, now, divine Ulysses more.
He in yon distant isle a sufferer lies
Of hopeless sorrow, through constraint the guest
Still of the nymph Calypso, without means
Or power to reach his native shores again, 20
Alike of gallant barks and friends deprived,
Who might conduct him o'er the spacious Deep.
Nor this is all, but enemies combine
To slay his son ere yet he can return
From Pylus, whither he hath gone to learn 25
There, or in Sparta, tidings of his Sire.

To whom the cloud-assembler God replied.
 What word hath pass'd thy lips, daughter beloved ?
 Hast thou not purposed that arriving soon
 At home, Ulysses shall destroy his foes ?
 Guide thou, Telemachus, (for well thou canst,) 30
 That he may reach secure his native coast,
 And that the suitors baffled may return.

He ceased, and thus to Hermes spake, his son.
 Hermes ! (for thou art herald of our will 35
 At all times,) to yon bright-hair'd nymph convey
 Our fixt resolve, that brave Ulysses thence
 Depart, unaccompanied by God or man.
 Borne on a corded raft, and suffering woe
 Extreme, he on the twentieth day shall reach, 40
 Not sooner, Scherie the deep-soil'd, possess'd
 By the Phœacians, kinsmen of the Gods.
 They as a God shall reverence the Chief,
 And in a bark of theirs shall send him thence
 To his own home, much treasure, brass and gold 45
 And raiment giving him, to an amount
 Surpassing all that, had he safe return'd,
 He should by lot have shared of Ilium's spoil.
 Thus fate appoints Ulysses to regain
 His country, his own palace, and his friends. 50

He ended, nor the Argicide refused,
 Messenger of the skies ; his sandals fair,
 Ambrosial, golden, to his feet he bound,
 Which o'er the moist wave, rapid as the wind,
 Bear him, and o'er the illimitable earth, 55
 Then took his rod with which, at will, all eyes
 He closes soft, or opes them wide again.
 So arm'd, forth flew the valiant Argicide.
 Alighting on Pieria, down he stoop'd
 To Ocean, and the billows lightly skimm'd 60
 In form a sea-mew, such as in the bays
 Tremendous of the barren Deep her food
 Seeking, dips oft in brine her ample wing.
 In such disguise o'er many a wave he rode,
 But reaching, now, that isle remote, forsook 65
 The azure Deep, and at the spacious grot,
 Where dwelt the amber-tressed nymph, arrived,

Found her within. A fire on all the hearth
 Blazed sprightly, and, afar-diffused, the scent
 Of smooth-split cedar and of cypress wood
 Odorous, burning, cheer'd the happy isle. 70
 She, busied at the loom, and plying fast
 Her golden shuttle, with melodious voice
 Sat chaunting there ; a grove on either side,
 Alder and poplar, and the redolent branch
 Wide-spread of Cypress, skirted dark the cave. 75
 There many a bird of broadest pinion built
 Secure her nest, the owl, the kite, and daw
 Long-tongued, frequenter of the sandy shores.

A garden-vine luxuriant on all sides 80
 Mantled the spacious cavern, cluster-hung
 Profuse ; four fountains of serenest lymph
 Their sinuous course pursuing side by side,
 Stray'd all around, and every where appear'd
 Meadows of softest verdure, purpled o'er
 With violets ; it was a scene to fill 85

A God from heaven with wonder and delight.
 Hermes, Heaven's messenger, admiring stood
 That sight, and having all survey'd, at length
 Enter'd the grotto ; nor the lovely nymph
 Him knew not soon as seen, for not unknown
 Each to the other the Immortals are,
 How far soever separate their abodes.

Yet found he not within the mighty Chief
 Ulysses ; he sat weeping on the shore, 95
 Forlorn, for there his custom was with groans
 Of sad regret to afflict his breaking heart,
 Looking continual o'er the barren Deep.
 Then thus Calypso, nymph divine, the God
 Question'd, from her resplendent throne august.

Hermes ! possessor of the potent rod !
 Who, though by me much reverenced and beloved,
 So seldom comest, say, wherefore comest now ?
 Speak thy desire ; I grant it, if thou ask
 Things possible, and possible to me.
 Stay not, but entering farther, at my board
 Due rites of hospitality receive.

So saying, the Goddess with ambrosial food

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Her table cover'd, and with rosy juice
Nectareous charged the cup. Then ate and drank 110
The Argicide and herald of the skies,
And in his soul with that repast divine
Refresh'd, his message to the nymph declared.

Questionest thou, a Goddess, me a God ?
I tell thee truth, since such is thy demand. 115
Not willing, but by Jove constrain'd, I come.
For who would, voluntary, such a breadth
Enormous measure of the salt expanse,
Where city none is seen in which the Gods
Are served with chosen hecatombs and prayer ? 120
But no divinity may the designs
Elude, or controvert, of Jove supreme.
He saith, that here thou hold'st the most distrest
Of all those warriors who nine years assail'd
The city of Priam, and, (that city sack'd,) 125
Departed in the tenth ; but, going thence,
Offended Pallas, who with adverse winds
Opposed their voyage, and with boisterous waves.
Then perish'd all his gallant friends, but him
Billows and storms drove hither ; Jove commands
That thou dismiss him hence without delay, 130
For fate ordains him not to perish here
From all his friends remote, but he is doom'd
To see them yet again, and to arrive
At his own palace in his native land. 135

He said ; divine Calypso at the sound
Shudder'd, and in wing'd accents thus replied.
Ye are unjust, ye Gods, and envious past
All others, grudging if a Goddess take
A mortal man openly to her arms ! 140
So, when the rosy-finger'd Morning chose
Orion, though ye live yourselves at ease,
Yet ye all envied her, until the chaste
Diana from her golden throne dispatch'd
A silent shaft, which slew him in Ortygia.
So, when the golden-tressed Ceres, urged 145
By passion, took IäSION to her arms
In a thrice-labour'd fallow, not untaught
Was Jove that secret long, and hearing it,

Indignant, slew him with his cudent bolt.
 So also, O ye Gods, ye envy me
 The mortal man, my consort. Him I saved
 Myself, while solitary on his keel
 He rode, for with his sulphurous arrow Jove
 Had cleft his bark amid the sable Deep.
 Then perish'd all his gallant friends, but him
 Billows and storms drove hither, whom I loved
 Sincere, and fondly destined to a life
 Immortal, unobnoxious to decay.
 But since no Deity may the designs
 Elude or controvert of Jove supreme,
 Hence with him o'er the barren Deep, if such
 The Sovereign's will, and such his stern command.
 But undismiss'd he goes by me, who ships
 Myself well-oar'd and mariners have none
 To send with him athwart the spacious flood ;
 Yet freely, readily, my best advice
 I will afford him, that, escaping all
 Danger, he may regain his native shore.

Then Hermes thus, the messenger of heaven.
 Act as thou say'st, fearing the frown of Jove,
 Lest, if provoked, he spare not even thee.

So saying, the dauntless Argicide withdrew,
 And she (Jove's mandate heard) all-graceful went,
 Seeking the brave Ulysses ; on the shore
 She found him seated ; tears succeeding tears
 Deluged his eyes, while, hopeless of return,
 Life's precious hours to eating cares he gave
 Continual, with the nymph now charm'd no more.
 Yet, cold as she was amorous, still he pass'd
 His nights beside her in the hollow grot,
 Constrain'd, and day by day the rocks among
 Which lined the shore heart-broken sat, and oft
 While wistfully he eyed the barren Deep,
 Wept, groan'd, desponded, sigh'd, and wept again.
 Then, drawing near, thus spake the nymph divine.

Unhappy ! weep not here, nor life consume
 In anguish ; go ; thou hast my glad consent.
 Arise to labour ; hewing down the trunks
 Of lofty trees, fashion them with the axe

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To a broad raft, which closely floor'd above,
 Shall hence convey thee o'er the gloomy Deep.
 Bread, water, and the red grape's cheering juice
 Myself will put on board, which shall preserve
 Thy life from famine ; I will also give
 New raiment for thy limbs, and will dispatch
 Winds after thee to waft thee home unharm'd,
 If such the pleasure of the Gods who dwell
 In yonder boundless heaven, superior far
 To me, in knowledge and in skill to judge.

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She ceased ; but horror at that sound the heart
 Chill'd of Ulysses, and in accents wing'd
 With wonder, thus the noble Chief replied.

Ah ! other thoughts than of my safe return
 Employ thee, Goddess, now, who bid'st me pass
 The perilous gulf of Ocean on a raft,
 That wild expanse terrible, which even ships
 Pass not, though form'd to cleave their way with ease,
 And joyful in propitious winds from Jove.
 No,—let me never, in despite of thee,
 Embark on board a raft, nor till thou swear,
 Oh Goddess ! the inviolable oath,
 That future mischief thou intend'st me none.

He said ; Calypso, beauteous Goddess, smiled,
 And, while she spake, stroking his cheek, replied.

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Thou dost asperse me rudely, and excuse
 Of ignorance hast none, far better taught ;
 What words were these ? How could'st thou thus reply ?
 Now hear me, Earth, and the wide Heaven above !

Hear, too, ye waters of the Stygian stream
 Under the earth, (by which the blessed Gods
 Swear trembling, and revere the awful oath !)

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That future mischief I intend thee none.
 No, my designs concerning thee are such
 As, in an exigence resembling thine,
 Myself, most sure, should for myself conceive.
 I have a mind more equal, not of steel
 My heart is form'd, but much to pity inclined.

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So saying, the lovely Goddess with swift pace
 Led on, whose footsteps he as swift pursued.
 Within the vaulted cavern they arrived,

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The Goddess and the man ; on the same throne
 Ulysses sat, whence Hermes had arisen,
 And viands of all kinds, such as sustain
 The life of mortal man, Calypso placed
 Before him, both for beverage and for food. 235
 She opposite to the illustrious Chief
 Reposed, by her attendant maidens served
 With nectar and ambrosia. They their hands
 Stretch'd forth together to the ready feast,
 And when nor hunger more nor thirst remain'd
 Unsated, thus the beauteous nymph began.

Laertes' noble son, for wisdom famed
 And artifice ! oh canst thou thus resolve
 To seek, incontinent, thy native shores ? 240
 I pardon thee. Farewell ! but could'st thou guess
 The woes which fate ordains thee to endure
 Ere yet thou reach thy country, well-content
 Here to inhabit, thou would'st keep my grot
 And be immortal, howso'er thy wife 250
 Engage thy every wish day after day.
 Yet can I not in stature or in form
 Myself suspect inferior aught to her,
 Since competition cannot be between
 Mere mortal beauties, and a form divine. 255

To whom Ulysses, ever-wise, replied.
 Awful Divinity ! be not incensed.
 I know that my Penelope in form
 And stature altogether yields to thee,
 For she is mortal, and immortal thou, 260
 From age exempt ; yet not the less I wish
 My home, and languish daily to return.
 But should some God amid the sable Deep
 Dash me again into a wreck, my soul
 Shall bear *that* also ; for, by practice taught,
 I have learn'd patience, having much endured
 By tempest and in battle both. Come then 265
 This evil also ! I am well prepared.

He ended, and the sun sinking, resign'd
 The earth to darkness. Then in a recess
 Interior of the cavern, side by side
 Reposed, they took their amorous delight. 270

But when Aurora, daughter of the dawn,
Look'd rosy forth, Ulysses then in haste
Put on his vest and mantle, and the nymph
Her snowy vesture of transparent woof,
Graceful, redundant ; to her waist she bound
Her golden zone, and veil'd her beauteous head,
Then, musing, plann'd the noble Chief's return.
She gave him, fitted to the grasp, an axe
Of iron, ponderous, double edged, with haft
Of olive-wood, inserted firm, and wrought
With curious art. Then, placing in his hand
A polish'd adze, she led, herself, the way
To her isle's utmost verge, where tallest trees
But dry long since and sapless stood, which best
Might serve his purposes, as buoyant most,
The alder, poplar, and cloud-piercing fir.
To that tall grove she led and left him there,
Seeking her grot again. Then slept not He,
But, swinging with both hands the axe, his task
Soon finish'd ; trees full twenty to the ground
He cast, which, dexterous, with his adze he smooth'd,
The knotted surface chipping by a line.
Meantime the lovely Goddess to his aid
Sharp augers brought, with which he bored the beams,
Then, side by side placing them, fitted each
To other, and with long cramps join'd them all.
Broad as an artist, skill'd in naval works,
The bottom of a ship of burden spreads,
Such breadth Ulysses to his raft assign'd.
He deck'd her over with long planks, upborne
On massy beams ; He made the mast, to which
He added suitable the yard ; he framed
Rudder and helm to regulate her course,
With wicker-work he border'd all her length
For safety, and much ballast stow'd within.
Meantime, Calypso brought him for a sail
Fittest materials, which he also shaped,
And to his sail due furniture annex'd
Of cordage strong, foot-ropes and ropes aloft,
Then heaved her down with levers to the Deep.
He finish'd all his work on the fourth day,

And on the fifth, Calypso, nymph divine,
Dismiss'd him from her isle, but laved him first,
And cloth'd him in sweet-scented garments new. 315
Two skins the Goddess also placed on board,
One charged with crimson wine, and ampler one
With water, nor a bag with food replete
Forgot, nutritious, grateful to the taste,
Nor yet, her latest gift, a gentle gale 320
And manageable, which Ulysses spread,
Exulting, all his canvas to receive.
Beside the helm he sat, steering expert,
Nor sleep fell ever on his eyes that watch'd
Intent the Pleiads, tardy in decline 325
Bootes, and the Bear, call'd else the Wain,
Which, in his polar prison circling, looks
Direct toward Orion, and alone
Of these sinks never to the briny Deep. 330
That star the lovely Goddess bade him hold
Continual on his left through all his course.
Ten days and seven, he, navigating, cleaved
The brine, and on the eighteenth day, at length,
The shadowy mountains of Phœacia's land 335
Descried, where nearest to his course it lay
Like a broad buckler on the waves afloat.

But Neptune, now returning from the land
Of Ethiopia, mark'd him on his raft
Skimming the billows, from the mountain-tops
Of distant Solyma.¹ With tenfold wrath 340
Inflamed that sight he view'd, his brows he shook,
And thus within himself, indignant, spake.

So then—new counsels in the skies, it seems,
Propitious to Ulysses, have prevail'd
Since Ethiopia hath been my abode. 345
He sees Phœacia nigh, where he must leap
The boundary of his woes ; but ere that hour
Arrive, I will ensure him many a groan.

So saying, he grasp'd his trident, gather'd dense
The clouds and troubled ocean ; every storm
From every point he summon'd, earth and sea
Darkening, and the night fell black from heaven. 350

¹ The Solymi were the ancient inhabitants of Pisidia in Asia Minor.

The East, the South, the heavy-blowing West,
And the cold North-wind clear, assail'd at once
His raft, and heaved on high the billowy flood.
All hope, all courage, in that moment lost,
The Hero thus within himself complain'd.

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Wretch that I am, what destiny at last
Attends me ! much I fear the Goddess' words
All true, which threaten'd me with numerous ills
On the wide sea, ere I should reach my home.
Behold them all fulfill'd ! With what a storm
Jove hangs the heavens, and agitates the Deep !
The winds combined beat on me. Now I sink !
Thrice blest, and more than thrice, Achaia's sons
At Ilium slain for the Atridae' sake !

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Ah, would to heaven that, dying, I had felt
That day the stroke of fate, when me the dead
Achilles guarding, with a thousand spears
Troy's furious host assail'd ! Funereal rites
I then had shared, and praise from every Greek,
Whom now the most inglorious death awaits.

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While thus he spake, a billow on his head
Bursting impetuous, whirl'd the raft around,
And dashing from his grasp the helm, himself
Plunged far remote. Then came a sudden gust
Of mingling winds, that in the middle snapp'd
His mast, and hurried o'er the waves afar,
Both sail and sail-yard fell into the flood.

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Long time submerged he lay, nor could with ease
The violence of that dread shock surmount,
Or rise to air again, so burthensome

His drench'd apparel proved ; but, at the last,
He rose, and rising, sputter'd from his lips

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The brine that trickled copious from his brows.
Nor, harass'd as he was, resign'd he yet

His raft, but buffetting the waves aside
With desperate efforts, seized it, and again

Fast seated on the middle deck, escaped.

Then roll'd the raft at random in the flood,
Wallowing unwieldy, toss'd from wave to wave.

As when in autumn, Boreas o'er the plain
Conglomerated thorns before him drives,

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They, tangled, to each other close adhere,
So her the winds drove wild about the Deep. 395
By turns the South consign'd her to be sport
For the rude North-wind, and by turns, the East
Yielded her to the worrying West a prey.
But Cadmus' beauteous daughter (Ino once,
Now named Leucothea) saw him ; mortal erst 400
Was she, and trod the earth², but nymph become
Of Ocean since, in honours shares divine.
She mark'd his anguish, and, while toss'd he roam'd,
Pitied Ulysses ; from the flood, in form 405
A cormorant, she flew, and on the raft
Close-corded perching, thus the Chief address'd.
Alas, unhappy ! how hast thou incensed
So terribly the Shaker of the shores,
That he pursues thee with such numerous ills ? 410
Sink thee he cannot, wish it as he may.
Thus do, (for I account thee not unwise,)
Thy garments putting off, let drive thy raft
As the winds will, then swimming, strive to reach
Phœacia, where thy doom is to escape. 415
Take this. This ribbon bind beneath thy breast,
Celestial texture. Thenceforth every fear
Of death dismiss, and laying once thy hands
On the firm continent, unbind the zone,
Which thou shalt cast far distant from the shore 420
Into the Deep, turning thy face away.
So saying, the Goddess gave into his hand
The wondrous zone, and cormorant in form,
Plunging herself into the waves again
Headlong, was hidden by the closing flood. 425
But still Ulysses sat perplex'd, and thus
The toil-enduring Hero reason'd sad.
Alas ! I tremble lest some God design
To ensnare me yet, bidding me quit the raft.
But let me well beware how I obey 430
Too soon that precept, for I saw the land
Of my foretold deliverance far remote.
Thus, therefore, will I do, for such appears

² The translator finding himself free to choose between *αὐδῆσσα* and *οὐδῆσσα*, has preferred the latter.

My wiser course. So long as yet the planks
 Mutual adhere, continuing on board 435
 My raft, I will endure whatever woes ;
 But when the waves shall shatter it, I will swim,
 My sole resource then left. While thus he mused,
 Neptune a billow of enormous bulk
 Hollow'd into an overwhelming arch 440
 On high up-heaving, smote him. As the wind
 Tempestuous, falling on some stubble-heap,
 The arid straws dissipates every way,
 So flew the timbers. He, a single beam
 Bestriding, oar'd it onward with his feet, 445
 As he had urged an horse. His raiment, then,
 Gift of Calypso, putting off, he bound
 His girdle on, and prone into the sea
 With wide-spread palms prepared for swimming, fell.
 Shore-shaker Neptune noted him ; he shook 450
 His awful brows, and in his heart he said.
 Thus, suffering many miseries, roam the flood,
 Till thou shalt mingle with a race of men,
 Heaven's special favourites ; yet even there
 Fear not that thou shalt feel thy sorrows light. 455
 He said, and scourging his bright steeds, arrived
 At *Ægæ*, where his glorious palace stands.
 But other thoughts Minerva's mind employ'd
 Jove's daughter ; every wind binding beside,
 She lull'd them, and enjoin'd them all to sleep, 460
 But roused swift Boreas, and the billows broke
 Before Ulysses, that, delivered safe
 From a dire death, the noble Chief might mix
 With maritime Phœacia's sons renown'd.
 Two nights he wander'd, and two days, the flood 465
 Tempestuous, death expecting every hour ;
 But when Aurora, radiant-hair'd, had brought
 The third day to a close, then ceased the wind,
 And breathless came a calm ; he nigh at hand
 The shore beheld, darting acute his sight
 Toward it, from a billow's towering top. 470
 Precious as to his children seems the life
 Of some fond father through disease long-time
 And pain stretch'd languid on his couch, the prey

Of some vindictive Power, but now, at last,
By gracious heaven to ease and health restored,
So grateful to Ulysses' sight appear'd
Forests and hills. Impatient with his feet
To press the shore, he swam ; but when within
Such distance as a shout may fly, he came,
The thunder of the sea against the rocks
Then smote his ear ; for hoarse the billows roar'd
On the firm land, belch'd horrible abroad,
And the salt spray dimm'd all things to his view.
For neither port for ships nor sheltering cove
Was there, but the rude coast a headland bluff
Presented, rocks and craggy masses huge.
Then, hope and strength exhausted both, deep-groan'd
The Chief, and in his noble heart complain'd.

Alas ! though Jove hath given me to behold,
Unhoped the land again, and I have pass'd,
Furrowing my way, these numerous waves, there seems
No egress from the hoary flood for me.
Sharp stones hem in the waters ; wild the surge
Raves everywhere ; and smooth the rocks arise ;
Deep also is the shore on which my feet
No standing gain, or chance of safe escape.
What if some billow catch me from the Deep
Emerging, and against the pointed rocks
Dash me conflicting with its force in vain ?
But should I, swimming, trace the coast in search
Of sloping beach, haven or shelter'd creek,
I fear lest, groaning, I be snatch'd again
By stormy gusts into the fishy Deep,
Or lest some monster of the flood receive
Command to seize me, of the many such
By the illustrious Amphitrite bred ;
For that the mighty Shaker of the shores
Hates me implacable, too well I know.

While such discourse within himself he held,
A huge wave heaved him on the rugged coast,
Where flay'd his flesh had been, and all his bones
Broken together, but for the infused
Good counsel of Minerva azure-eyed.
With both hands suddenly he seized the rock,

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And groaning, clench'd it till the billow pass'd. So baffled he that wave; but yet again The refluent flood rush'd on him, and with force Resistless dash'd him far into the sea. As pebbles to the hollow polypus Extracted from his stony bed, adhere, So he, the rough rocks clasping, stripp'd his hands Raw, and the billows now whelm'd him again. Then had the hapless Hero premature Perish'd, but for sagacity inspired By Pallas azure-eyed. Forth from the waves Emerging, where the surf burst on the rocks, He coasted (looking landward as he swam) The shore, with hope of port or level beach. But when, still swimming, to the mouth he came Of a smooth sliding river, there he deem'd Safest the ascent, for it was undeform'd By rocks, and shelter'd close from every wind. He felt the current, and thus, ardent, pray'd.	520
Oh hear, whate'er thy name, Sovereign who rulest This river! at whose mouth from all the threats Of Neptune 'scaped, with rapture I arrive. Even the immortal Gods the wanderer's prayer Respect, and such am I, who reach, at length, Thy stream, and clasp thy knees, after long toil. I am thy suppliant. Oh King! pity me.	525
He said; the river God at once repress'd His current, and it ceased; smooth he prepared The way before Ulysses, and the land Vouchsafed him easy at his channel's mouth. There once again he bent for ease his limbs, Both arms and knees, in conflict with the floods Exhausted; swoln his body was all o'er, And from his mouth and nostrils stream'd the brine. Breathless and speechless, and of life well nigh Bereft he lay, through dreadful toil immense.	530
But when, revived, his dissipated powers He recollect'd, loosing from beneath His breast the zone divine, he cast it far Into the brackish stream, and a huge wave Returning bore it downward to the sea,	535
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Where Ino caught it. Then, the river's brink
Abandoning among the rushes prone
He lay, kiss'd oft the soil, and sighing, said,

Ah me ! what sufferings must I now sustain,
What doom, at last, awaits me ? If I watch 560
This woeful night, here, at the river's side,
What hope but that the frost and copious dews,
Weak as I am, my remnant small of life
Shall quite extinguish, and the chilly air
Breathed from the river at the dawn of day ?
But if, ascending this declivity,
I gain the woods, and in some thicket sleep,
(If sleep indeed can find me overtoil'd
And cold-benumb'd,) then I have cause to fear
Lest I be torn by wild beast and devour'd.

Long time he mused, but at the last his course
Bent to the woods, which not remote he saw
From the sea-brink, conspicuous on a hill.
Arrived, between two neighbour shrubs he crept, 575
Both olives, this the fruitful, that the wild ;
A covert, which nor rough winds blowing moist
Could penetrate, nor could the noon-day sun
Smite through it, or unceasing showers pervade,
So thick a roof the ample branches form'd
Close interwoven ; under these the Chief 580
Retiring, with industrious hands a bed
Collected broad of leaves, which there he found
Abundant strew'd, such store as had sufficed
Two travellers or three for covering warm,
Though winter's roughest blasts had raged the while.
That bed with joy the suffering Chief renown'd
Contemplated, and occupying soon 585

The middle space, hillock'd it high with leaves.
As when some swain hath hidden deep his torch
Beneath the embers, at the verge extreme
Of all his farm, where, having neighbours none,
He saves a seed or two of future flame
Alive, doom'd else to fetch it from afar,
So with dry leaves Ulysses overspread 590
His body, on whose eyes Minerva pour'd
The balm of sleep copious, that he might taste

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BOOK VI.

ARGUMENT.

Minerva designing an interview between the daughter of Alcinoüs and Ulysses, admonishes her in a dream to carry down her clothes to the river, that she may wash them, and make them ready for her approaching nuptials. That task performed, the Princess and her train amuse themselves with play ; by accident they awake Ulysses ; he comes forth from the wood, and applies himself with much address to Nausicaa, who compassionating his distressed condition, and being much affected by the dignity of his appearance, interests herself in his favour, and conducts him to the city.

THERE then the noble sufferer lay, by sleep
Oppress'd and labour ; meantime, Pallas sought
The populous city of Phæacia's sons.

They, in old time, in Hypereia dwelt
The spacious, neighbours of a giant race,
The haughty Cyclops, who, endued with power
Superior, troubled them with frequent wrongs.

Godlike Nausithoüs then arose, who thence
To Scheria led them, from all nations versed
In arts of cultivated life, remote ;

With bulwarks strong their city he enclosed,
Built houses for them, temples to the Gods,
And gave to each a portion of the soil.

But he already by decree of fate
Had journey'd to the shades, and in his stead
Alcinoüs, by the Gods instructed, reign'd.

To his abode Minerva azure-eyed
Repair'd, neglecting nought which might advance
Magnanimous Ulysses' safe return.

She sought the sumptuous chamber where, in form
And feature perfect as the Gods, the young
Nausicaa, daughter of the King, reposed.
Fast by the pillars of the portal lay
Two damsels, one on either side, adorn'd
By all the Graces, and the doors were shut.

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Soft as a breathing air, she stole toward
 The royal virgin's couch, and at her head
 Standing, address'd her. Daughter she appear'd
 Of Dymas famed for maritime exploits,
 Her friend and her coeval; so disguised
 Cœrulean-eyed Minerva thus began.

Nausicaa! wherefore hath thy mother borne
 A child so negligent? Thy garments share,
 Thy most magnificent, no thought of thine.
 Yet thou must marry soon, and must provide
 Robes for thyself, and for thy nuptial train.
 Thy fame on these concerns and honour stand;
 These managed well, thy parents shall rejoice.
 The dawn appearing, let us to the place
 Of washing, where thy work-mate I will be
 For speedier riddance of thy task, since soon
 The days of thy virginity shall end;
 For thou art woo'd already by the prime
 Of all Phœacia, country of thy birth.
 Come then, solicit at the dawn of day
 Thy royal father, that he send thee forth
 With mules and carriage for conveyance hence
 Of thy best robes, thy mantles and thy zones.
 Thus more commodiously thou shalt perform
 The journey, for the cisterns lie remote.

So saying, Minerva, Goddess azure-eyed,
 Rose to Olympus, the reputed seat
 Eternal of the Gods, which never storms
 Disturb, rains drench, or snow invades, but calm
 The expanse and cloudless shines with purest day.
 There the inhabitants divine rejoice
 For ever, and (her admonition given)
 Cœrulean-eyed Minerva thither flew.

Now came Aurora bright enthroned, whose rays
 Awaken'd fair Nausicaa; she her dream
 Remember'd wondering, and her parents sought,
 Anxious to tell them. Them she found within.
 Beside the hearth her royal mother sat,
 Spinning soft fleeces with sea-purple dyed
 Among her menial maidens, but she met
 Her father, whom the Nobles of the land

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Had summon'd, issuing abroad to join
The illustrious Chiefs in council. At his side
She stood, and thus her filial suit preferr'd.

Sir¹! wilt thou lend me of the royal wains 70

A sumpter-carriage? for I wish to bear
My costly clothes, but sullied and unfit
For use, at present, to the river-side.

It is but seemly that thou should'st repair
Thyself to consultation with the Chiefs 75

Of all Phœacia, clad in pure attire;
And my own brothers five, who dwell at home,
Two wedded, and the rest of age to wed,
Are all desirous, when they dance, to wear
Raiment new bleach'd; all which is my concern. 80

So spake Nausicaa; for she dared not name
Her own glad nuptials to her father's ear,
Who, conscious yet of all her drift, replied.

I grudge thee neither mules, my child, nor aught
That thou canst ask beside. Go, and my train 85
Shall furnish thee a sumpter-carriage forth
High-built, strong-wheel'd, and of capacious size.

So saying, he issued his command, whom quick
His grooms obey'd. They in the court prepared
The sumpter-carriage, and adjoin'd the mules. 90

And now the virgin from her chamber, charged
With raiment, came, which on the car she placed,
And in the carriage-chest, meantime, the Queen,
Her mother, viands of all kinds disposed,
And fill'd a skin with wine. Nausicaa rose 95
Into her seat; but, ere she went, received
A golden cruse of oil from the Queen's hand
For unction of herself and of her maids.

Then, seizing scourge and reins, she lash'd the mules.
They trampled loud the soil, straining to draw 100
Herself with all her vesture; nor alone
She went, but follow'd by her virgin train.
At the delightful rivulet arrived
Where those perennial cisterns were prepared

¹ In the Original, she calls him *papa!* a more natural style of address, and more endearing. But ancient as this appellative is, it is also so familiar in modern use, that the Translator feared to hazard it.

With purest crystal of the fountain fed
Profuse, sufficient for the deepest stains,
Loosing the mules, they drove them forth to browze
On the sweet herb beside the dimpled flood.

105

The carriage, next, lightening, they bore in hand
The garments down to the unsullied wave,
And thrust them heaped into the pools, their task
Dispatching brisk, and with an emulous haste.
When they had all purified, and no spot
Could now be seen or blemish more, they spread
The raiment orderly along the beach

110

Where dashing tides had cleansed the pebbles most,
And laving, next, and smoothing o'er with oil
Their limbs, all seated on the river's bank,
They took repast, leaving the garments, stretch'd
In noon-day fervour of the sun, to dry.

115

120

Their hunger satisfied, at once arose
The mistress and her train, and putting off
Their head-attire, play'd wanton with the ball,
The princess singing to her maids the while.
Such as shaft-arm'd Diana roams the hills,

125

Täygetus sky-capt, or Erymanth,
The wild boar chasing, or fleet-footed hind,
All joy; the rural nymphs, daughters of Jove,
Sport with her, and Latona's heart exults;
She high her graceful head above the rest
And features lifts divine, though all be fair,
With ease distinguishable from them all;
So all her train she, virgin pure, surpass'd.

130

But when the hour of her departure thence
Approach'd, (the mules now yoked again, and all
Her elegant apparel folded neat,)

135

Minerva azure-eyed mused how to wake
Ulysses, that he might behold the fair
Virgin, his destined guide into the town.
The Princess, then, casting the ball toward
A maiden of her train, erroneous threw,
And plunged it deep into the dimpling stream.
All shriek'd; Ulysses at the sound awoke,
And, sitting, meditated thus the cause.

140

Ah me! what mortal race inhabit here?

145

Rude are they, contumacious and unjust ?
 Or hospitable, and who fear the Gods ?
 So shrill the cry and feminine of nymphs
 Fills all the air around, such as frequent
 The hills, clear fountains, and herbaceous meads. 150
 Is this a neighbourhood of men endued
 With voice articulate ? But what avails
 To ask ? I will myself go forth and see.

So saying, divine Ulysses from beneath
 His thicket crept, and from the leafy wood 155
 A spreading branch pluck'd forcibly, design'd
 A decent screen effectual, held before.
 So forth he went, as goes the lion forth,
 The mountain-lion, conscious of his strength,
 Whom winds have vexed and rains ; fire fills his eyes, 160
 And whether herds or flocks, or woodland deer
 He find, he rends them, and adust for blood,
 Abstains not even from the guarded fold,
 Such sure to seem in virgin eyes, the Chief,
 All naked as he was, left his retreat, 165
 Reluctant, by necessity constrain'd.
 Him foul with sea-foam horror-struck they view'd,
 And o'er the jutting shores fled all dispersed.
 Nausicaa alone fled not ; for her
 Pallas courageous made, and from her limbs, 170
 By power divine, all tremor took away.
 Firm she expected him ; he doubtful stood,
 Or to implore the lovely maid, her knees
 Embracing, or, aloof standing, to ask
 In gentle terms discreet the gift of clothes, 175
 And guidance to the city where she dwelt.
 Him so deliberating, most, at length,
 This counsel pleased ; in suppliant terms aloof
 To sue to her, lest if he clasp'd her knees,
 The virgin should that bolder course resent. 180
 Then gentle, thus, and well-advised he spake.

Oh Queen ! thy earnest suppliant I approach.
 Art thou some Goddess, or of mortal race ?
 For if some Goddess, and from heaven arrived,
 Diana, then, daughter of mighty Jove
 I deem thee most, for such as hers appear 185

Thy form, thy stature, and thy air divine.
 But if, of mortal race, thou dwell below,
 Thrice happy then, thy parents I account,
 And happy thrice thy brethren. Ah ! the joy
 Which always for thy sake their bosoms fills,
 When thee they view, all lovely as thou art,
 Entering majestic on the graceful dance.

But him beyond all others blest I deem,
 The youth, who, wealthier than his rich compeers,
 Shall win and lead thee to his honour'd home.
 For never with these eyes a mortal form
 Beheld I comparable aught to thine,
 In man or woman. Wonder-rapt I gaze.

Such erst, in Delos, I beheld a palm
 Beside the altar of Apollo, tall,
 And growing still ; (for thither too I sail'd,
 And numerous were my followers in a voyage
 Ordain'd my ruin,) and as I then view'd
 That palm long time amazed, for never grew
 So straight a shaft, so lovely from the ground,
 So, Princess ! thee with wonder I behold,
 Charm'd into fixt astonishment, by awe
 Alone forbidden to embrace thy knees,
 For I am one on whom much woe hath fallen.

Yesterday I escaped (the twentieth day
 Of my distress by sea) the dreary Deep ;
 For, all those days, the waves and rapid storms
 Bore me along, impetuous, from the isle
 Ogygia ; till at length the will of heaven
 Cast me, that I might also here sustain
 Affliction on your shore ; for rest, I think,
 Is not for me. No. The immortal Gods
 Have much to accomplish ere that day arrive.

But, oh Queen, pity me ! who after long*
 Calamities endured, of all who live
 Thee first approach, nor mortal know beside
 Of the inhabitants of all the land.
 Shew me your city ; give me, although coarse,
 Some covering, (if coarse covering *thou* canst give,)
 And may the Gods thy largest wishes grant,
 House, husband, concord ! for of all the gifts

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Of heaven, more precious none I deem, than peace
 'Twixt wedded pair, and union undissolved ;
 Envy torments their enemies, but joy
 Fills every virtuous breast, and most their own. 230

To whom Nausicaa the fair replied.
 Since, stranger ! neither base by birth thou seem'st,
 Nor unintelligent, (but Jove, the King
 Olympian, gives to good and bad alike 235
 Prosperity according to his will,
 And grief to thee, which thou must patient bear,)
 Now, therefore, at our land and city arrived,
 Nor garment thou shalt want, nor aught beside
 Due to a suppliant guest like thee forlorn. 240
 I will both show thee where our city stands,
 And who dwell here. Phœacia's sons possess
 This land ; but I am daughter of their King,
 The brave Alcinoüs, on whose sway depends
 For strength and wealth the whole Phœacian race. 245

She said, and to her beauteous maidens gave
 Instant commandment :—My attendants, stay !
 Why flee ye thus, and whither, from the sight
 Of a mere mortal ? Seems he in your eyes
 Some enemy of ours ? The heart beats not, 250
 Nor shall it beat hereafter, which shall come
 An enemy to the Phœacian shores,
 So dear to the immortal Gods are we.
 Remote, amid the billowy Deep, we hold
 Our dwelling, utmost of all human-kind, 255
 And free from mixture with a foreign race.
 This man a miserable wanderer comes,
 Whom we are bound to cherish, for the poor
 And stranger are from Jove, and trivial gifts
 To such are welcome. Bring ye therefore food 260
 And wine, my maidens, for the guest's regale,
 And lave him where the stream is shelter'd most.

She spake ; they stood, and by each other's words
 Encouraged, placed Ulysses where the bank
 O'erhung the stream, as fair Nausicaa bade, 265
 Daughter of King Alcinoüs the renown'd.
 Apparel also at his side they spread,
 Mantle and vest, and next, the limpid oil

Presenting to him in the golden cruse,
Exhortèd him to bathe in the clear stream.
Ulysses then the maidens thus bespake.

270

Ye maidens, stand apart, that I may cleanse,
Myself, my shoulders from the briny surf,
And give them oil which they have wanted long.
But in your presence I bathe not, ashamed
To show myself unclothed to female eyes.

275

He said ; they went, and to Nausicaa told
His answer ; then the Hero in the stream
His shoulders laved, and loins incrusted rough
With the salt spray, and with his hands the scum
Of the wild ocean from his locks express'd.
Thus wash'd all over, and refresh'd with oil,
He put the garments on Nausicaa's gift.
Then Pallas, progeny of Jove, his form
Dilated more, and from his head diffused
His curling locks like hyacinthine flowers.
As when some artist, by Minerva made
And Vulcan wise to execute all tasks
Ingenious, binding with a golden verge
Bright silver, finishes a graceful work,
Such grace the Goddess o'er his ample chest
Copious diffused, and o'er his manly brows.
Retiring, on the beach he sat, with grace
And dignity illumèd, where, viewing him,
The virgin Princess with amazement mark'd
His beauty, and her damsels thus bespake.

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My white-arm'd maidens, listen to my voice !
Not hated, sure, by all above, this man
Among Phæacia's godlike sons arrives.
At first I deem'd him of plebeian sort
Dishonourable, but he now assumes
A near resemblance to the Gods above.
Ah ! would to heaven it were my lot to call
Husband some native of our land like him
Accomplish'd, and content to inhabit here !
Give him, my maidens, food, and give him wine.

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She ended ; they, obedient to her will,
Both wine and food, dispatchful, placed, and glad,
Before Ulysses ; he rapacious ate,

Toil-suffering Chief, and drank, for he had lived
From taste of aliment long time estranged. 310

On other thoughts meantime intent, her charge
Of folded vestments neat the Princess placed
Within the royal wain, then yoked the mules,
And to her seat herself ascending call'd
Ulysses to depart, and thus she spake. 315

Up, stranger! seek the city. I will lead
Thy steps toward my royal Father's house,
Where all Phœacia's Nobles thou shalt see.
But thou (for I account thee not unwise,) 320

This course pursue. While through the fields we pass,
And labours of the rural hind, so long
With my attendants follow fast the mules
And sumpter-carriage. I will be thy guide.

But, once the summit gain'd, on which is built
Our city with proud bulwarks fenced around,
And laved on both sides by its pleasant port
Of narrow entrance, where our gallant barks

Line all the road, each station'd in her place,
And where, adjoining close the splendid fane 330
Of Neptune, stands the forum with huge stones
From quarries thither drawn, constructed strong,

In which the rigging of their barks they keep,
Sail-cloth and cordage, and make smooth their oars;
(For bow and quiver the Phœacian race 335

Heed not, but masts and oars, and ships well-poised,
With which exulting they divide the flood.)

Then, cautious, I would shun their bitter taunts
Disgustful, lest they mock me as I pass;
For of the meaner people some are coarse 340
In the extreme, and it may chance that one,

The basest there, seeing us, shall exclaim,—
What handsome stranger of athletic form
Attends the Princess? Where had she the chance
To find him? We shall see them wedded soon. 345

Either she hath received some vagrant guest
From distant lands, (for no land neighbours ours,)
Or by her prayers incessant won, some God
Hath left the heavens to be for ever hers.

'Tis well if she have found, by her own search, 350

An husband for herself, since she accounts
 The nobles of Phœacia, who her hand
 Solicit numerous worthy to be scorn'd.—
 Thus will they speak injurious. I should blame
 A virgin guilty of such conduct much, 355
 Myself, who reckless of her parents' will,
 Should so familiar with a man consort,
 Ere celebration of her spousal rites.
 But mark me, stranger! following my advice,
 Thou shalt the sooner at my father's hands 360
 Obtain safe conduct and conveyance home.
 Sacred to Pallas a delightful grove
 Of poplar skirts the road, which we shall reach
 Ere long ; within that grove a fountain flows,
 And meads encircle it ; my father's farm 365
 Is there, and his luxuriant garden-plot ;
 A shout might reach it from the city-walls.
 There wait, till in the town arrived, we gain
 My father's palace, and when reason bids
 Suppose us there, then entering thou the town, 370
 Ask where Alcinoüs dwells, my valiant Sire.
 Well known is his abode, so that with ease
 A child might lead thee to it, for in nought
 The other houses of our land the house
 Resemble, in which dwells the Hero, King 375
 Alcinoüs. Once within the court received
 Pause not, but, with swift pace advancing, seek
 My mother ; she beside a column sits
 In the hearth's blaze, twirling her fleecy threads
 Tinged with sea-purple, bright, magnificent, 380
 With all her maidens orderly behind.
 There also stands my father's throne, on which
 Seated, he drinks and banquets like a God.
 Pass that ; then suppliant clasp my mother's knees,
 So shalt thou quickly win a glad return 385
 To thy own home, however far remote.
 Her favour once, and her kind aid secured,
 Thenceforth thou may'st expect thy friends to see,
 Thy dwelling, and thy native soil again.
 So saying, she with her splendid scourge the mules
 Lash'd onward. They (the stream soon left behind,) 390

With even footsteps graceful smote the ground ;
But so she ruled them, managing with art
The scourge, as not to leave afar, although
Following on foot, Ulysses and her train. 395

The sun had now declined, when in that grove
Renown'd, to Pallas sacred, they arrived,
In which Ulysses sat, and fervent thus
Sued to the daughter of Jove ægis-arm'd.

Daughter invincible of Jove supreme ! 400

Oh, hear me ! hear me now, because when erst
The mighty Shaker of the shores incensed
Toss'd me from wave to wave, thou heard'st me not.
Grant me among Phœacia's sons to find
Benevolence and pity of my woes ! 405

He spake, whose prayer well-pleased the Goddess heard,
But reverencing the brother² of her sire,
Appear'd not to Ulysses yet, whom he
Pursued with fury to his native shores.

² Neptune.

BOOK VII.

A R G U M E N T.

Nausicaa returns from the river, whom Ulysses follows. He halts by her direction, at a small distance from the palace, which at a convenient time he enters. He is well received by Alcinous and his Queen; and having related to them the manner of his being cast on the shore of Scheria, and received from Alcinous the promise of safe conduct home, retires to rest.

SUCH prayer Ulysses, toil-worn Chief renown'd,
To Pallas made; meantime the virgin, drawn
By her stout mules, Phœacia's city reach'd,
And, at her father's house arrived, the car
Stay'd in the vestibule; her brothers five, 5
All godlike youths, assembling quick around,
Released the mules, and bore the raiment in.
Meantime, to her own chamber she return'd,
Where, soon as she arrived, an ancient dame
Eurymedusa, by peculiar charge 10
Attendant on that service, kindled fire.
Sea-rovers her had from Epirus brought
Long since, and to Alcinous she had fallen
By public gift, for that he ruled, supreme,
Phœacia, and as oft as he harangued 15
The multitude, was reverenced as a God.
She waited on the fair Nausicaa, she
Her fuel kindled, and her food prepared.
And now Ulysses from his seat arose
To seek the city, around whom, his guard 20
Benevolent, Minerva, cast a cloud,
Lest, haply, some Phœacian should presume
To insult the Chief, and question whence he came.
But ere he enter'd yet the pleasant town,
Minerva azure-eyed met him, in form 25
A blooming maid, bearing her pitcher forth.

She stood before him, and the noble Chief
Ulysses, of the Goddess thus enquired.

Daughter! wilt thou direct me to the house
Of brave Alcinoüs, whom this land obeys ?
For I have here arrived, after long toil,
And from a country far remote, a guest
To all who in Phæacia dwell, unknown.

To whom the Goddess of the azure-eyes.
The mansion of thy search, stranger revered !
Myself will shew thee ; for not distant dwells
Alcinoüs from my father's own abode :
But hush ! be silent—I will lead the way ;
Mark no man ; question no man ; for the sight
Of strangers is unusual here, and cold
The welcome by this people shown to such.
They, trusting in swift ships, by the free grant
Of Neptune traverse his wide waters, borne
As if on wings, or with the speed of thought.

So spake the Goddess, and with nimble pace
Led on, whose footsteps he, as quick, pursued.
But still the seaman-throng through whom he pass'd
Perceived him not ; Minerva, Goddess dread,
That sight forbidding them, whose eyes she dimm'd
With darkness shed miraculous around
Her favourite Chief. Ulysses, wondering, mark'd
Their port, their ships, their forum, the resort
Of Heroes, and their battlements sublime
Fenced with sharp stakes around, a glorious show !
But when the King's august abode he reach'd,
Minerva azure-eyed, then thus began.

My father ! thou behold'st the house to which
Thou badest me lead thee. Thou shalt find our Chiefs
And high-born Princes banqueting within.
But enter fearing nought, for boldest men
Speed ever best, come whencesoe'er they may.
First thou shalt find the Queen, known by her name
Areta ; lineal in descent from those
Who gave Alcinoüs birth, her royal spouse.
Neptune begat Nausithoüs, at the first,
On Peribœa, loveliest of her sex,
Latest-born daughter of Eurymedon,

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Heroic King of the proud giant race,
 Who, losing all his impious people, shared
 The same dread fate himself. Her Neptune loved, 70
 To whom she bore a son, the mighty prince
 Nausithoüs, in his day King of the land.
 Nausithoüs himself two sons begat,
 Rhexenor and Alcinoüs. Phœbus slew
 Rhexenor at his home, a bridegroom yet, 75
 Who, father of no son, one daughter left,
 Areta, wedded to Alcinoüs now,
 And whom the Sovereign in such honour holds,
 As woman none enjoys of all on earth
 Existing, subjects of an husband's power. 80

Like veneration she from all receives
 Unfeign'd, from her own children, from himself
 Alcinoüs, and from all Phœacia's race,
 Who, gazing on her as she were divine,
 Shout when she moves in progress through the town, 85
 For she no wisdom wants, but sits, herself,
 Arbitress of such contests as arise
 Between her favourites, and decides aright.
 Her countenance once and her kind aid secured,
 Thou may'st thenceforth expect thy friends to see, 90
 Thy dwelling, and thy native soil again.

So Pallas spake, Goddess cœrulean-eyed,
 And o'er the untillable and barren Deep
 Departing, Scheria left, land of delight,
 Whence reaching Marathon, and Athens next,
 She pass'd into Eretheus' fair abode. 95

Ulysses, then, toward the palace moved
 Of King Alcinoüs, but immersed in thought
 Stood, first, and paused, ere with his foot he press'd
 The brazen threshold ; for a light he saw
 As of the sun or moon illumining clear 100
 The palace of Phœacia's mighty King.
 Walls plated bright with brass, on either side
 Stretch'd from the portal to the interior house,
 With azure cornice crown'd ; the doors were gold
 Which shut the palace fast ; silver the posts 105
 Rear'd on a brazen threshold, and above,
 The lintels, silver, architraved with gold.

Mastiffs, in gold and silver, lined the approach
On either side, by art celestial framed
Of Vulcan, guardians of Alcinoüs gate
For ever, unobnoxious to decay. 110

Sheer from the threshold to the inner house
Fixt thrones the walls, through all their length, adorn'd,
With mantles overspread of subtlest warp
Transparent, work of many a female hand. 115

On these the princes of Phœacia sat,
Holding perpetual feasts, while golden youths
On all the sumptuous altars stood, their hands
With burning torches charged, which, night by night, 120
Shed radiance over all the festive throng.

Full fifty female menials served the King
In household offices; the rapid mills
These turning, pulverize the mellow'd grain,
Those, seated orderly, the purple fleece 125
Wind off, or ply the loom, restless as leaves
Of lofty poplars fluttering in the breeze;
'Bright as with oil the new-wrought texture shone.

Far as Phœacian mariners all else
Surpass, the swift ship urging through the floods, 130
So far in tissue-work the women pass
All others, by Minerva's self endow'd
With richest fancy and superior skill.

Without the court, and to the gates adjoin'd
A spacious garden lay, fenced all around
Secure, four acres measuring complete. 135

There grew luxuriant many a lofty tree,
Pomegranate, pear, the apple blushing bright,
The honied fig, and unctuous olive smooth.

Those fruits, nor winter's cold nor summer's heat
Fear ever, fail not, wither not, but hang 140
Perennial, while unceasing zephyr breathes
Gently on all, enlarging these, and those
Maturing genial; in an endless course
Pears after pears to full dimensions swell, 145

¹ Καροσέων δ' οθονεων ἀπολείβεται ὑγρον ἔλαιον.

Pope has given no translation of this line in the text of his work, but has translated it in a note. It is variously interpreted by commentators; the sense which is here given of it is that recommended by Eustathius.

Figs follow figs, grapes clustering grow again
 Where clusters grew, and (every apple stript)
 The boughs soon tempt the gatherer as before.
 There too, well-rooted, and of fruit profuse,
 His vineyard grows ; part, wide-extended, basks 150
 In the sun's beams ; the arid level glows ;
 In part they gather, and in part they tread
 The wine-press, while, before the eye, the grapes
 Here put their blossom forth, there, gather fast
 Their blackness. On the garden's verge extreme
 Flowers of all hues smile all the year, arranged 155
 With neatest art judicious ; and amid
 The lovely scene two fountains welling forth,
 One visits, into every part diffused,
 The garden-ground, the other soft beneath 160
 The threshold steals into the palace-court,
 Whence every citizen his vase supplies.

Such were the ample blessings on the house
 Of King Alcinoüs by the Gods bestow'd.

Ulysses wondering stood, and when, at length,
 Silent he had the whole fair scene admired,
 With rapid step enter'd the royal gate.

The chiefs he found and Senators within
 Libation pouring to the vigilant spy

Mercurius, whom with wine they worshipp'd last 170
 Of all the Gods, and at the hour of rest.

Ulysses, toil-worn Hero, through the house
 Pass'd undelaying, by Minerva thick
 With darkness circumfused, till he arrived
 Where King Alcinoüs and Areta sat.

Around Areta's knees his arms he cast,
 And in that moment, broken clear away
 The cloud all went, shed on him from above.
 Dumb sat the guests, seeing the unknown Chief,
 And wondering gazed. He thus his suit preferr'd. 180

Areta, daughter of the Godlike Prince
 Rhexenor ! suppliant at thy knees I fall,
 Thy royal spouse imploring, and thyself,
 (After ten thousand toils), and these your guests,
 To whom heaven grant felicity, and to leave 185
 Their treasures to their babes, with all the rights

And honours, by the people's suffrage, theirs !
 But oh vouchsafe me, who have wanted long
 And ardent wish'd my home, without delay
 Safe conduct to my native shores again !

190

Such suit he made, and in the ashes sat
 At the hearth-side ; they mute long time remain'd,
 Till, at the last, the ancient Hero spake
 Echeneus, eldest of Phœacia's sons,
 With eloquence beyond the rest endow'd,
 Rich in traditional lore, and wise
 In all, who thus, benevolent, began.

195

Not honourable to thyself, O King !
 Is such a sight, a stranger on the ground
 At the hearth-side seated, and in the dust.
 Meantime, thy guests, expecting thy command,
 Move not ; thou, therefore, raising by his hand
 The stranger, lead him to a throne, and bid
 The heralds mingle wine, that we may pour
 To thunder-bearing Jove, the suppliant's friend.
 Then let the cateress for thy guest produce
 Supply, a supper from the last regale.

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Soon as those words Alcinous heard, the King,
 Upraising by his hand the prudent Chief
 Ulysses from the hearth, he made him sit
 On a bright throne, displacing for his sake
 Laodamas his son, the virtuous youth
 Who sat beside him, and whom most he loved.
 And now, a maiden charged with golden ewer
 And with an argent laver, pouring, first,
 Pure water on his hands, supplied him, next,
 With a resplendent table, which the chaste
 Directress of the stores furnish'd with bread
 And dainties, remnants of the last regale.
 Then ate the Hero toil-inured, and drank,
 And to his herald thus Alcinous spake.

Pontonoüs ! mingling wine, bear it around
 To every guest in turn, that we may pour
 To thunder-bearer Jove, the stranger's friend,
 And guardian of the suppliant's sacred rights.

He said ; Pontonoüs, as he bade, the wine
 Mingled delicious, and the cups dispensed

With distribution regular to all.
 When each had made libation, and had drunk
 Sufficient, then Alcinoüs thus began. 230

Phœacian Chiefs and Senators, I speak
 The dictates of my mind, therefore attend !
 Ye all have feasted;—to your homes and sleep.
 We will assemble at the dawn of day
 More senior Chiefs, that we may entertain 235
 The stranger here, and to the Gods perform
 Due sacrifice ; the convoy that he asks
 Shall next engage our thoughts, that free from pain
 And from vexation, by our friendly aid
 He may revisit, joyful and with speed, 240
 His native shore, however far remote.
 No inconvenience let him feel or harm,
 Ere his arrival ; but, arrived, thenceforth
 He must endure whatever lot the Fates
 Spun for him in the moment of his birth. 245
 But should he prove some Deity from heaven
 Descended, then the Immortals have in view
 Designs not yet apparent ; for the Gods
 Have ever from of old reveal'd themselves
 At our solemnities, have on our seats 250
 Sat with us evident, and shared the feast ;
 And even if a single traveller
 Of the Phœacians meet them, all reserve
 They lay aside ; for with the Gods we boast
 As near affinity as do themselves 255
 The Cyclops, or the Giant race profane.²

To whom Ulysses, ever-wise, replied.
 Alcinoüs ! think not so. Resemblance none
 In figure or in lineaments I bear
 To the immortal tenants of the skies, 260
 But to the sons of earth ; if ye have known
 A man afflicted with a weight of woe
 Peculiar, let me be with him compared ;

² The Scholiast explains the passage thus :—We resemble the Gods in righteousness as much as the Cyclops and Giants resembled each other in impiety. But in this sense of it there is something intricate, and contrary to Homer's manner. We have seen that they derived themselves from Neptune, which sufficiently justifies the above interpretation.

Woes even passing his could I relate,
And all inflicted on me by the Gods. 265
But let me eat, comfortless as I am,
Uninterrupted ; for no call is loud
As that of hunger in the ears of man ;
Importunate, unreasonable, it constrains
His notice, more than all his woes beside.
So, I much sorrow feel, yet not the less
Hear I the blatant appetite demand
Due sustenance, and with a voice that drowns
Even all my sufferings, till itself be fill'd.
But expedite ye at the dawn of day 275
My safe return into my native land,
After much misery ; and let life itself
Forsake me, may I but once more behold
All that is mine, in my own lofty abode.

He spake, whom all applauded, and advised, 280
Unanimous, the guest's conveyance home,
Who had so fitly spoken. When at length,
All had libation made and were sufficed,
Departing to his house, each sought repose.
But still Ulysses in the hall remain'd, 285
Where, godlike King, Alcinoüs at his side
Sat, and Areüs ; the attendants clear'd
Meantime the board, and thus the Queen white arm'd
(Marking the vest and mantle which he wore,
And which her maidens and herself had made) 290
In accents wing'd with eager haste began.
Stranger ! the first enquiry shall be mine ;
Who art, and whence ? From whom received'st thou these ?
Saidst not—I came a wanderer o'er the Deep ?

To whom Ulysses, ever-wise, replied. 295
Oh Queen ! the task were difficult to unfold
In all its length the story of my woes,
For I have numerous from the Gods received ;
But I will answer thee as best I may.
There is a certain isle, Ogygia, placed 300
Far distant in the Deep ; there dwells, by man
Alike unvisited and by the Gods,
Calypso, beauteous nymph, but deeply skill'd

In artifice, and terrible in power,
Daughter of Atlas. Me alone my fate
Her miserable inmate made, when Jove
Had riven asunder with his cendent bolt
My bark in the mid-sea. There perish'd all
The valiant partners of my toils, and I
My vessel's keel embracing day and night
With folded arms, nine days was borne along. 305
But on the tenth dark night, as pleased the Gods,
They drove me to Ogygia, where resides
Calypso, beauteous nymph, dreadful in power ;
She rescued, cherish'd, fed me, and her wish
Was to confer on me immortal life, 310
Exempt for ever from the sap of age.
But me her offer'd boon sway'd not. Seven years
I there abode continual, with my tears.
Bedewing ceaseless my ambrosial robes, 320
Calypso's gift divine ; but when, at length,
(Seven years elapsed) the circling eighth arrived,
She then, herself, my quick departure thence
Advised, by Jove's own mandate overawed,
Which even her had influenced to a change. 325
On a well-corded raft she sent me forth
With numerous presents ; bread she put and wine
On board, and clothed me in immortal robes ;
She sent before me also a fair wind
Fresh-blowing, but not dangerous. Seventeen days 330
I sail'd the flood continual, and descried,
On the eighteenth, your shadowy mountains tall,
When my exulting heart sprang at the sight,
All wretched as I was and still ordain'd
To strive with difficulties many and hard 335
From adverse Neptune ; he the stormy winds
Exciting opposite, my watery way
Impeded, and the waves heaved to a bulk
Immeasurable, such as robb'd me soon
Deep-groaning, of the raft, my only hope ; 340
For her the tempest scatter'd, and myself
This ocean measured swimming, till the winds
And mighty waters cast me on your shore.

Me there emerging, the huge waves had dash'd
 Full on the land, where, incommodious most, 345
 The shore presented only roughest rocks,
 But, leaving it, I swam the Deep again,
 Till now, at last, a river's gentle stream
 Received me, by no rocks deform'd, and where
 No violent winds the shelter'd bank annoy'd. 350

I flung myself on shore, exhausted, weak,
 Needing repose; ambrosial night came on,
 When from the Jove-descended stream withdrawn,
 I in a thicket laid me down on leaves
 Which I had heap'd together, and the Gods 355
 O'erwhelm'd my eye-lids with a flood of sleep.
 There under wither'd leaves, forlorn, I slept
 All the long night, the morning, and the noon,
 But balmy sleep, at the decline of day,
 Broke from me; then, your daughter's train I heard 360
 Sporting, with whom she also sported, fair
 And graceful as the Gods. To her I kneel'd.
 She, following the dictates of a mind
 Ingenuous, pass'd in her behaviour all
 Which even ye could from an age like hers 365
 Have hoped; for youth is ever indiscreet.
 She gave me plenteous food, with richest wine
 Refresh'd my spirit, taught me where to bathe,
 And clothed me as thou seest; thus, though a prey
 To many sorrows, I have told thee truth. 370

To whom Alcinous answer thus return'd.
 My daughter's conduct, I perceive, hath been
 In this erroneous, that she led thee not
 Hither at once, with her attendant train,
 For thy first suit was to herself alone. 375

Thus then Ulysses, wary Chief, replied.
 Blame not, O Hero, for so slight a cause,
 Thy faultless child; she bade me follow them,
 But I refused, by fear and awe restrain'd,
 Lest thou should'st feel displeasure at that sight 380
 Thyself; for we are all, in every clime,
 Suspicious, and to worst constructions prone.

So spake Ulysses, to whom thus the King.

I bear not, stranger ! in my breast an heart
Causeless irascible ; for at all times

385

A temperate equanimity is best.

And oh, I would to heaven, that, being such
As now thou art, and of one mind with me,
Thou would'st accept my daughter, would'st become
My son-in-law, and dwell contented here !

390

House would I give thee, and possessions too,
Were such thy choice ; else, if thou choose it not,
No man in all Phœacia shall by force
Detain thee. Jupiter himself forbid !

For proof, I will appoint thee convoy hence
To-morrow ; and while thou by sleep subdued
Shalt on thy bed repose, they with their oars
Shall brush the placid flood, till thou arrive
At home, or at what place soe'er thou would'st,

395

Though far more distant than Eubœa lies,
Remotest isle from us, by the report

400

Of ours, who saw it when they thither bore
Golden-hair'd Rhadamanthus o'er the Deep,
To visit earth-born Tityus. To that isle

They went ; they reach'd it, and they brought him thence 405
Back to Phœacia, in one day, with ease.

Thou also shalt be taught what ships I boast
Unmatch'd in swiftness, and how far my crews
Excel, upturning with their oars the brine.

He ceased ; Ulysses toil-inured his words
Exulting heard, and praying, thus replied.

410

Eternal Father ! may the King perform
His whole kind promise ! grant him in all lands
A never-dying name, and grant to me
To visit safe my native shores again !

415

Thus they conferr'd ; and now Arete bade
Her fair attendants dress a fleecy couch
Under the portico, with purple rugs
Resplendent, and with arras spread beneath,
And over all with cloaks of shaggy pile.

420

Forth went the maidens, bearing each a torch,
And, as she bade, prepared in haste a couch
Of depth commodious, then, returning, gave

Ulysses welcome summons to repose.

Stranger! thy couch is spread. Hence to thy rest. 425
So they—Thrice grateful to his soul the thought
Seem'd of repose. There slept Ulysses then,
On his carved couch, beneath the portico,
But in the inner-house Alcinoüs found
His place of rest, and hers with royal state 430
Prepared, the Queen, his consort, at his side.

BOOK VIII.

ARGUMENT.

The Phœacians consult on the subject of Ulysses. Preparation is made for his departure. Alcinous entertains them at his table. Games follow the entertainment. Demodocus the bard sings, first the loves of Mars and Venus, then the introduction of the wooden horse into Troy. Ulysses, much affected by his song, is questioned by Alcinous, whence and who he is, and what is the cause of his sorrow.

BUT when Aurora, daughter of the dawn,
Blush'd in the East, then from his bed arose
The sacred might of the Phœacian King.
Then uprose also, city-waster Chief,
Ulysses, whom the King Alcinous
Led forth to council at the ships convened.
There, side by side, on polish'd stones they sat
Frequent; meantime, Minerva in the form
Of King Alcinous' herald ranged the town,
With purpose to accelerate the return
Of brave Ulysses to his native home,
And thus to every Chief the Goddess spake.

Phœacian Chiefs and Senators, away!
Haste all to council on the stranger held,
Who hath of late beneath Alcinous' roof
Our King arrived, a wanderer o'er the Deep,
But in his form majestic as a God.

So saying, she roused the people, and at once
The seats of all the senate-court were fill'd
With fast-assembling throngs, no few of whom
Had mark'd Ulysses with admiring eyes.
Then Pallas o'er his head and shoulders broad
Diffusing grace celestial, his whole form
Dilated, and to statelier height advanced,
That worthier of all reverence he might seem
To the Phœacians, and might many a feat

5

10

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25

Achieve, with which they should assay his force.

When, therefore, the assembly now was full,
Alcinoüs, them addressing, thus began.

Phœacian Chiefs and Senators ! I speak
The dictates of my mind, therefore attend.
This guest unknown to me, hath, wandering, found
My palace, either from the East arrived,
Or from some nation on our western side.
Safe conduct home he asks, and our consent
Here wishes ratified, whose quick return
Be it our part, as usual, to promote ;
For at no time the stranger, from what coast
Soe'er, who hath resorted to our doors,
Hath long complained of his detention here.
Haste—draw ye down into the sacred Deep
A vessel of prime speed, and from among
The people, fifty and two youths select,
Approved the best ; then lashing fast the oars,
Leave her, that at my palace ye may make
Short feast, for which myself will all provide.
Thus I enjoin the crew ; but as for those
Of sceptred rank, I bid them all alike
To my own board, that here we may regale
The stranger nobly, and let none refuse.
Call, too, Demodocus, the bard divine,
To share my banquet, whom the Gods have blest
With powers of song delectable, unmatch'd
By any, when his genius once is fired.

He ceased, and led the way, whom follow'd all
The sceptred senators, while to the house
An herald hasted of the bard divine.
Then, fifty mariners and two, from all
The rest selected, to the coast repair'd,
And, from her station on the sea-bank, launched
The galley down into the sacred Deep.
They placed the canvas and the mast on board,
Arranged the oars, unfurl'd the shining sail,
And leaving her in depth of water moor'd,
All sought the palace of Alcinoüs.

There soon the portico, the court, the hall
Were fill'd with multitudes of young and old,

30

35

40

45

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65

For whose regale the mighty monarch slew
 Two beeves, twelve sheep, and twice four fatted brawns.
 They flay'd them first, then busily their task
 Administering, prepared the joyous feast.

70

And now the herald came, leading with care
 The tuneful bard ; dear to the muse was he,
 Who yet appointed him both good and ill,
 Took from him sight, but gave him strains divine.

75

For him Pontonoüs in the midst disposed
 An argent-studded throne, thrusting it close
 To a tall column, where he hung his lyre
 Above his head, and taught him where it hung.

80

He sat before him, next, a polish'd board
 And basket, and a goblet fill'd with wine
 For his own use, and at his own command.

Then, all assail'd at once the ready feast,
 And when nor hunger more nor thirst they felt,
 Then came the muse, and roused the bard to sing

85

Exploits of men renown'd ; it was a song,
 In that day to the highest heaven extoll'd.

He sang of a dispute kindled between
 The son of Peleus, and Laertes¹ son,
 Both seated at a feast held to the Gods.

90

That contest Agamemnon, King of men,
 Between the noblest of Achaia's host
 Hearing, rejoiced ; for when in Pytho erst

He pass'd the marble threshold to consult
 The oracle of Apollo, such dispute

95

The voice divine had to his ear announced :
 For then it was that, first, the storm of war
 Came rolling on, ordain'd long time to afflict
 Troy and the Grecians, by the will of Jove.

So sang the bard illustrious ; then his robe
 Of purple dye with both hands o'er his head
 Ulysses drew, behind its ample folds
 Veiling his face, through fear to be observed

100

¹ Agamemnon having inquired at Delphos at what time the war should end, was answered, that the conclusion of it should happen at a time when a dispute should arise between two of his principal commanders. That dispute occurred at the time here alluded to, Achilles recommending force as most likely to reduce the city, and Ulysses stratagem.

By the Phœacians weeping at the song ;
 And ever as the bard harmonious ceased,
 He wiped his tears, and, drawing from his brows
 The mantle, pour'd libation to the Gods. 105
 But when the Chiefs (for they delighted heard
 Those sounds,) solicited again the bard,
 And he renew'd the strain, then covering close
 His countenance, as before, Ulysses wept. 110
 Thus, unperceived by all, the Hero mourn'd,
 Save by Alcinoüs ; he alone his tears
 (Beside him seated) mark'd, and his deep sighs
 O'erhearing, the Phœacians thus bespake. 115

Phœacia's Chiefs and Senators, attend !
 We have regaled sufficient, and the harp
 Heard to satiety, companion sweet
 And seasonable of the festive hour.
 Now go we forth for honourable proof 120
 Of our address in games of every kind,
 That this our guest may to his friends report,
 At home arrived, that none like us have learn'd
 To leap, to box, to wrestle, and to run.

So saying, he led them forth, whose steps the guests 125
 All follow'd, and the herald hanging high
 The sprightly lyre, took by his hand the bard
 Demodocus, whom he the self-same way
 Conducted forth by which the Chiefs had gone
 Themselves, for that great spectacle peepared. 130

They sought the forum ; countless swarm'd the throng
 Behind them as they went, and many a youth
 Strong and courageous to the strife arose.

Upstood Acroneus and Ocyalus,
 Elatreus, Nauteus, Prymneus, after whom 135

Anchialus with Anabeesineus

Arose, Eretmeus, Ponteus, Proreus bold,
 Amphialus and Thöon. Then arose,

In aspect dread as homicidal Mars,

Euryalus, and for his graceful form

(After Laodamas) distinguish'd most
 Of all Phœacia's sons, Naubolides.

Three also from Alcinoüs sprung, arose,
 Laodamas, his eldest ; Halius, next,

His second-born ; and godlike Clytoneus.
Of these, some started for the runner's prize.
They gave the race its limits. All at once
Along the dusty champaign swift they flew.
But Clytoneus, illustrious youth, outstripp'd
All competition ; far as mules surpass
Slow oxen furrowing the fallow ground,
So far before all others he arrived
Victorious, where the throng'd spectators stood.
Some tried the wrestler's toil severe, in which
Euryalus superior proved to all.

In the long leap Amphialus prevail'd ;
Elatreus most successful hurl'd the quoit,
And at the cestus³, last, the noble son
Of Scheria's King, Laodamas excell'd.
When thus with contemplation of the games
All had been gratified, Alcinous' son
Laodamas, arising, them address'd.

Friends ! ask we now the stranger, if he boast
Proficiency in aught. His figure seems
Not ill ; in thighs, and legs, and arms he shews
Much strength, and in his brawny neck ; nor youth
Hath left him yet, though batter'd he appears
With numerous troubles, and misfortune-flaw'd.
Nor know I hardships in the world so sure
To break the strongest down, as those by sea.

Then answer thus Euryalus return'd.
Thou hast well said, Laodamas ; thyself
Approaching, speak to him, and call him forth.
Which when Alcinous' noble offspring heard,
Advancing from his seat, amid them all
He stood, and to Ulysses thus began.

Stand forth, oh guest, thou also : prove thy skill
(If any such thou boast) in games like ours,
Which likeliest thou hast learn'd ; for greater praise

² Τοισ δ' απο νυσσης τετατο δρομος—This expression is by the commentators generally understood to be significant of the effort which they made at starting, but it is not improbable that it relates merely to the measurement of the course, otherwise, καρπαλιμως επετοντο will be tautologous.

³ In boxing.

Hath no man, while he lives, than that he know
His feet to exercise and hands aright. 180

Come then ; make trial ; scatter wide thy cares ;
We will not hold thee long ; the ship is launch'd
Already, and the crew stand all prepared.

To whom replied the wily Chief renown'd. 185

Wherefore, as in derision, have ye call'd
Me forth, Laodamas, to these exploits ?

No games have I, but many a grief, at heart,
And with far other struggles worn, here sit
Desirous only of conveyance home,
For which both King and people I implore. 190

Then him Euryalus aloud reproach'd.

I well believed it, friend ! in thee the guise
I see not of a man expert in feats
Athletic, of which various are perform'd
In every land ; thou rather seem'st with ships
Familiar ; one accustom'd to control
Some crew of trading mariners ; well-learn'd
*In stowage, pilotage, and wealth acquired
By rapine, but of no gyniastic powers. 200

To whom Ulysses, frowning dark, replied.

Thou hast ill spoken, sir, and like a man
Regardless whom he wrongs. Therefore the Gods
Give not endowments graceful in each kind,
Of body, mind, and utterance, all to one. 205

This man in figure less excels, yet Jove
Crowns him with eloquence ; his hearers charm'd
Behold him, while with modest confidence
He bears the prize of fluent speech from all,
And in the streets is gazed on as a God ! 210

Another, in his form the Powers above
Resembles, but no grace around his words
Twines itself elegant. So, thou in form
Hast excellence to boast ; a God employ'd
To make a master-piece in human shape,
Could but produce proportions just as thine ;
Yet hast thou an untutor'd intellect. 215

Thou much hast moved me ; thy unhandsome phrase
Hath roused my wrath ; I am not, as thou say'st,
A novice in these sports, but took the lead

In all, while youth and strength were on my side.
 But I am now in bands of sorrow held,
 And of misfortune, having much endured
 In war, and buffeting the boisterous waves.
 Yet, though with misery worn, I will essay
 My strength among you ; for thy words had teeth
 Whose bite hath pinch'd and pain'd me to the proof.

225

He said ; and mantled as he was, a quoit
 Upstarting, seized, in bulk and weight all those
 Transcending far, by the Phœacians used.

230

Swiftly he swung, and from his vigorous hand
 Sent it. Loud sang the stone, and as it flew
 The maritime Phœacians low inclined
 Their heads beneath it ; over all the marks,
 And far beyond them, sped the flying rock.
 Minerva in a human form, the cast
 Prodigious measured, and aloud exclaim'd.

235

Stranger ! the blind himself might with his hands
 Feel out the 'vantage here. Thy quoit disdains
 Fellowship with a crowd, borne far beyond.
 Fear not a losing game ; Phœacian none
 Will reach thy measure, much less overcast.

240.

She ceased ; Ulysses, hardy Chief, rejoiced
 That in the circus he had found a judge
 So favourable, and with brisker tone,
 As less in wrath, the multitude address'd.

245

Young men, reach this, and I will quickly heave
 Another such, or yet a heavier quoit.
 Then, come the man whose courage prompts him forth
 To box, to wrestle with me, or to run ;
 For ye have chafed me much, and I decline
 No strife with any here, but challenge all
 Phœacia, save Laodamas alone.
 He is mine host. Who combats with his friend ?

250

To call to proof of hardiment the man
 Who entertains him in a foreign land,
 Would but evince the challenger a fool,
 Who, so, should cripple his own interest there.
 As for the rest, I none refuse, scorn none,
 But wish for trial of you, and to match
 In opposition fair my force with yours.

255

260

There is no game athletic in the use
 Of all mankind, too difficult for me ;
 I handle well the polish'd bow, and first
 Amid a thousand foes strike whom I mark, 265
 Although a throng of warriors at my side
 Imbattled, speed their shafts at the same time.
 Of all Achaia's sons who erst at Troy
 Drew bow, the sole who bore the prize from me
 Was Philoctetes ; I resign it else 270
 To none now nourish'd with the fruits of earth.
 Yet mean I no comparison of myself
 With men of ancient times, with Hercules,
 Or with Oechalian Eurytus, who, both,
 The Gods themselves in archery he defied. 275
 Soon, therefore, died huge Eurytus, ere yet
 Old age he reach'd ; him, angry to be call'd
 To proof of archership, Apollo slew.
 But, if ye name the spear, mine flies a length
 By no man's arrow reach'd ; I fear no foil 280
 From the Phœacians, save in speed alone ;
 For I have suffer'd hardships, dash'd and drench'd
 By many a wave, nor had I food on board
 At all times, therefore am I much unstrung.

He spake, and silent the Phœacians sat, 285
 Of whom alone Alcinoüs thus replied.

Since, stranger, not ungraceful is thy speech,
 Who hast but vindicated in our ears
 Thy question'd prowess, angry that this youth
 Reproach'd thee in the presence of us all,
 That no man qualified to give his voice 290
 In public might affront thy courage more ;
 Now mark me, therefore, that in time to come,
 While feasting with thy children and thy spouse,
 Thou may'st inform the Heroes of thy land
 Even of our proficiency in arts 295
 By Jove enjoin'd us in our father's days.
 We boast not much the boxer's skill, nor yet
 The wrestler's ; but light-footed in the race
 Are we, and navigators well inform'd.
 Our pleasures are the feast, the harp, the dance, 300
 Garments for change ; the tepid bath ; the bed.

Come, ye Phœaciens, beyond others skill'd
 To tread the circus with harmonious steps,
 Come, play before us ; that our guest, arrived
 In his own country, may inform his friends
 How far in seamanship we all excel,
 In running, in the dance, and in the song.
 Haste ! bring ye to Demodocus his lyre
 Clear-toned, left somewhere in our hall at home.

305

So spake the godlike King, at whose command
 The herald to the palace quick return'd
 To seek the charming lyre. Meantime arose
 Nine arbiters, appointed to intend
 The whole arrangement of the public games,
 To smooth the circus-floor, and give the ring
 Its compass, widening the attentive throng.
 Ere long the herald came, bearing the harp,
 With which Demodocus supplied, advanced
 Into the middle area, around whom
 Stood blooming youths, all skilful in the dance.
 With footsteps justly timed all smote at once
 The sacred floor ; Ulysses wonder-fixt,
 The ceaseless play of twinkling⁴ feet admired.

315

Then tuning his sweet chords, Demodocus
 A jocund strain began, his theme the loves
 Of Mars and Cytherea chaplet-crown'd ;
 How first, clandestine, they embraced beneath
 The roof of Vulcan ; her, by many a gift
 Seduced, Mars won, and with adulterous lust
 The bed dishonour'd of the King of fire.
 The Sun, a witness of their amorous sport,
 Bore swift the tale to Vulcan ; he, apprized
 Of that foul deed, at once his smithy sought,
 In secret darkness of his inmost soul
 Contriving vengeance ; to the stock he heaved
 His anvil huge, on which he forged a snare
 Of bands indissoluble, by no art

320

325

330

335

⁴ The translator is indebted to Mr. Grey for an epithet more expressive of the original (*Μαρμαρύγας*) than any other, perhaps, in all our language. See the Ode on the Progress of Poetry.

“ To brisk notes in cadence beating,
 Glance their *many twinkling* feet.”

To be untied, durance for ever firm.
 The net prepared, he bore it, fiery-wroth, 340
 To his own chamber and his nuptial couch,
 Where stretching them from post to post, he wrapp'd
 With those fine meshes all his bed around,
 And hung them numerous from the roof, diffused
 Like spiders' filaments, which not the Gods
 Themselves could see, so subtle were the toils.
 When thus he had encircled all his bed
 On every side, he feign'd a journey thence
 To Lemnos, of all cities that adorn
 The earth, the city that he favours most. 350
 Nor kept the God of the resplendent reins
 Mars, drowsy watch, but seeing that the famed
 Artificer of heaven had left his home,
 Flew to the house of Vulcan, hot to enjoy
 The Goddess with the wreath-encircled brows. 355
 She, newly from her potent Sire return'd
 The son of Saturn, sat. Mars, entering, seized
 Her hand, hung on it, and thus urged his suit.
 To bed, my fair, and let us love ! for lo !
 Thine husband is from home, to Lemnos gone, 360
 And to the Sintians, men of barbarous speech.
 He spake, nor she was loth, but bedward too
 Like him inclined ; so then to bed they went,
 And as they laid them down, down stream'd the net
 Around them, labour exquisite of hands 365
 By ingenuity divine inform'd.
 Small room they found, so prison'd ; not a limb
 Could either lift, or move, but felt at once
 Entanglement from which was no escape.
 And now the glorious artist, ere he yet 370
 Had reach'd the Lemnian isle, limping, return'd
 From his feign'd journey, for his spy the Sun
 Had told him all. With aching heart he sought
 His home, and, standing in the vestibule,
 Frantic with indignation roar'd to heaven, 375
 And roar'd again, summoning all the Gods.—
 Oh Jove ! and all ye powers for ever blest !
 Here ! hither look, that ye may view a sight
 Ludicrous, yet too monstrous to be borne,

How Venus always with dishonour loads
 Her cripple spouse, doting on fiery Mars !
 And wherefore ? for that he is fair in form
 And sound of foot, I ricket-boned, and weak.
 Whose fault is this ? Their fault, and theirs alone
 Who gave me being ; ill-employ'd were they
 Begetting me, one better far unborn.

380

See where they couch together on my bed
 Lascivious ! ah, sight hateful to my eyes !
 Yet cooler wishes will they feel, I ween,
 To press my bed hereafter ; here to sleep
 Will little please them fondly as they love.
 But these my toils and tangles will suffice
 To hold them here, till Jove shall yield me back
 Complete, the sum of all my nuptial gifts
 Paid to him for the shameless strumpet's sake
 His daughter, as incontinent as fair.

390

395

He said, and in the brazen-floor'd abode
 Of Jove the Gods assembled. Neptune came,
 Earth-circling Power ; came Hermes friend of man,
 And regent of the far-commanding bow,
 Apollo also came ; but chaste reserve
 Bashful kept all the Goddesses at home.
 The Gods by whose beneficence all live,
 Stood in the portal ; infinite arose
 The laugh of heaven, all looking down intent
 On that shrewd project of the smith divine,
 And, turning to each other, thus they said.

400

405

Bad works speed ill. The slow o'ertakes the swift.
 So Vulcan, tardy as he is, by craft
 Hath outstript Mars, although the fleetest far
 Of all who dwell in heaven, and the light-heel'd
 Must pay the adulterer's forfeit to the lame.

410

So spake the Powers immortal ; then the King
 Of radiant shafts thus question'd Mercury.

Jove's son, heaven's herald, Hermes, bounteous God ! 415
 Would'st thou such stricture close of bands endure
 For golden Venus lying at thy side ?

Whom answer'd thus the messenger of heaven.
 Archer divine ! yea, and with all my heart ;
 And be the bands which wind us round about

420

'Thrice these, innumerable, and let all
The Gods and Goddesses in heaven look on,
So I may clasp Vulcan's fair spouse the while.

He spake ; then laugh'd the Immortal powers again.
But not so Neptune ; he with earnest suit

425

The glorious artist urged to the release
Of Mars, and thus in accents wing'd he said.

Loose him ; accept my promise ; he shall pay
Full recompence in presence of us all.

Then thus the limping smith far-famed replied.
Earth-circler Neptune, spare me that request.

430

⁵Lame suitor, lame security. What bands
Could I devise for thee among the Gods,
Should Mars, emancipated once, escape,
Leaving both death and durance far behind ?

435

Him answer'd then the Shaker of the shores.
I tell thee, Vulcan, that if Mars by flight
Shun payment, I will pay, myself, the fine.

To whom the glorious artist of the skies.
Thou must not, canst not, shalt not be refused.

440

So saying, the might of Vulcan loosed the snare,
And they, detain'd by those coercive bands
No longer, from the couch upstarting flew,
Mars into Thrace, and to her Paphian home
The Queen of smiles, where deep in myrtle groves
Her incense-breathing altar stands embower'd.
Her there, the Graces laved, and oils diffused
O'er all her form, ambrosial, such as add
Fresh beauty to the Gods for ever young,
And clothed her in the loveliest robes of heaven.

445

Such was the theme of the illustrious bard.
Ulysses with delight that song, and all
The maritime Phœacian concourse heard.

Alcinoüs, then, (for in the dance they pass'd
All others), call'd his sons to dance alone,

455

⁵ The original line has received such a variety of interpretations, that a Translator seems free to choose. It has, however, a proverbial turn, which I have endeavoured to preserve, and have adopted that sense of the words which appears best to accord with what immediately follows. Vulcan pleads his own inability to enforce the demand, as a circumstance that made Neptune's promise unacceptable.

Halius and Laodamas ; they gave
 The purple ball into their hands, the work
 Exact of Polybus ; one, re-supine,
 Upcast it high toward the dusky clouds,
 The other springing into air, with ease
 Received it, ere he sank to earth again.
 When thus they oft had sported with the ball
 Thrown upward, next, with nimble interchange,
 They pass'd it to each other many a time,
 Footing the plain, while every youth of all
 The circus clapp'd his hands, and from beneath
 The din of stamping feet fill'd all the air.

460

Then, turning to Alcinoüs, thus the wise
 Ulysses spake. Alcinoüs ! mighty King !
 Illustrious above all Phœacia's sons !
 Incomparable are ye in the dance,
 Even as thou said'st. Amazement-fixt I stand !

465

So he, whom hearing, the imperial might
 Exulted of Alcinoüs, and aloud
 To his oar-skill'd Phœaciens thus he spake.

475

Phœacian Chiefs and Senators, attend !
 Wisdom beyond the common stint I mark
 In this our guest ; good cause in my account,
 For which we should present him with a pledge
 Of hospitality and love. The Chiefs
 Are twelve, who, highest in command, control
 The people, and the thirteenth Chief am I.
 Bring each a golden talent, with a vest
 Well-bleach'd, and tunic ; gratified with these,
 The stranger to our banquet shall repair
 Exulting ; bring them all without delay ;
 And let Euryalus by word and gift
 Appease him, for his speech was unadvised.

480

He ceased, whom all applauded, and at once
 Each sent his herald forth to bring the gifts,
 When thus Euryalus his Sire address'd.

485

Alcinoüs ! o'er Phœacia's sons supreme !
 I will appease our guest as thou command'st.
 This sword shall be his own, the blade all steel,
 The hilt of silver, and the unsullied sheath
 Of ivory recent from the carver's hand.

495

A gift like this he shall not need despise.

So saying, his silver-studded sword he gave
Into his grasp, and courteous, thus began.

Hail, honour'd stranger ! and if word of mine
Have harm'd thee, rashly spoken, let the winds
Bear all remembrance of it swift away !
May the Gods give thee to behold again
Thy wife, and to attain thy native shore,
Whence absent long, thou hast so much endured !

To whom Ulysses, ever-wise, replied.

Hail also thou, and may the Gods, my friend,
Grant thee felicity, and may never want
Of this thy sword touch thee in time to come,
By whose kind phrase appeased my wrath subsides !

He ended, and athwart his shoulders threw
The weapon bright-emboss'd. Now sank the sun,
And those rich gifts arrived, which to the house
Of King Alcinoüs the heralds bore,
Alcinoüs' sons received them, and beside
Their royal mother placed the precious charge.
The King then led the way, at whose abode
Arrived, again they press'd their lofty thrones,
And to Arete thus the monarch spake.

Haste, bring a coffer ; bring thy best, and store
A mantle and a sumptuous vest within ;
Warm for him, next a brazen bath, by which
Refresh'd, and viewing in fair order placed
The noble gifts by the Phœacian Lords
Conferr'd on him, he may the more enjoy
Our banquet, and the bard's harmonious song.
I give him also this my golden cup
Splendid, elaborate ; that, while he lives,
What time he pours libation forth to Jove
And all the Gods, he may remember me.

He ended, at whose words Arete bade
Her maidens with dispatch place o'er the fire
A tripod ample-womb'd ; obedient they
Advanced a laver to the glowing hearth,
Water infused, and kindled wood beneath.
The flames encircling bright the bellied vase,
Warm'd soon the flood within. Meantime the queen

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Producing from her chamber-stores a chest
All-elegant, within it placed the gold
And raiment, gifts of the Phœacian Chiefs,
With her own gifts, the mantle and the vest,
And in wing'd accents to Ulysses said.

540

Now take, thyself, the coffer's lid in charge ;
Girdle it quickly with a cord, lest loss
Befall thee on thy way, while thou perchance
Shalt sleep secure on board the sable bark.

545

Which when Ulysses heard, Hero renown'd,
Adjusting close the lid, he cast a cord
Around it, which with many a mazy knot
He tied, by Circe taught him long before.
And now, the mistress of the household charge
Summon'd him to his bath ; glad he beheld
The steaming vase, uncustom'd to its use
E'er since his voyage from the isle of fair
Calypso, although, while a guest with her,
Ever familiar with it, as a God.

550

Laved by attendant damsels, and with oil
Refresh'd, he put his sumptuous tunic on
And mantle, and proceeding from the bath
To the symposium, join'd the numerous guests ;
But, as he pass'd, the Princess all divine
Beside the pillars of the portals lost
In admiration of his graceful form,
Stood, and in accents wing'd him thus address'd.

555

Hail, stranger ! at thy native home arrived
Remember me, thy first deliverer here.

560

To whom Ulysses, ever-wise, replied.
Nausicaa ! daughter of the noble King
Alcinoüs ! So may Jove, high-thundering mate
Of Juno, grant me to behold again
My native land, and my delightful home,
As, even there, I will present my vows
To thee, adoring thee as I adore
The Gods themselves, virgin, by whom I live !

565

He said, and on his throne beside the King
Alcinoüs sat. And now they portion'd out
The feast to all, and charged the cups with wine,
And introducing by his hand the bard

570

575

Phœacia's glory, at the column's side
The herald placed Demodocus again.

580

Then, carving forth a portion from the loins
Of a huge brawn, of which uneaten still
Large part and delicate remain'd, thus spake
Ulysses—Herald ! bear it to the bard
For his regale, whom I will soon embrace
In spite of sorrow ; for respect is due
And veneration to the sacred bard
From all mankind, for that the muse inspires
Herself his song, and loves the tuneful tribe.

585

He ended, and the herald bore his charge
To the old Hero, who with joy received
That meed of honour at the bearer's hand.
Then, all, at once, assail'd the ready feast,
And hunger now and thirst both satisfied,
Thus to Demodocus Ulysses spake.

590

595

Demodocus ! I give thee praise above
All mortals, for that either thee the muse
Jove's daughter teaches, or the King, himself,
Apollo ; since thou so record'st the fate,
With such clear method, of Achaia's host,
Their deeds heroic, and their numerous toils,
As thou hadst present been thyself, or learnt
From others present there, the glorious tale.
Come, then, proceed ; that rare invention sing,
The horse of wood, which by Minerva's aid
Epeus framed, and which Ulysses erst
Convey'd into the citadel of Troy
With warriors fill'd, who laid all Ilium waste.
These things rehearse regular, and myself
Will, instant, publish in the ears of all
Thy fame, reporting thee a bard to whom
Apollo free imparts celestial song.

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He ended ; then Apollo with full force
Rush'd on Demodocus, and he began
What time the Greeks, first firing their own camp,
Steer'd all their galleys from the shore of Troy.
Already, in the horse conceal'd, his band
Around Ulysses sat ; for Ilium's sons
Themselves had drawn it to the citadel,

615

And there the mischief stood. Then, strife arose
 Among the Trojans compassing the horse,
 And threefold was the doubt; whether to cleave
 The hollow trunk asunder, or updrawn
 Aloft, to cast it headlong from the rocks,
 Or to permit the enormous image, kept
 Entire, to stand an offering to the Gods,
 Which was their destined course; for Fate had fix'd
 Their ruin sure, when once they had received
 Within their walls that engine huge, in which
 Sat all the bravest Grecians with the fate
 Of Ilium charged, and slaughter of her sons.
 He sang, how, from the horse effused, the Greeks
 Left their spacious ambush, and the town
 Made desolate. To others, in his song,
 He gave the praise of wasting all beside,
 But told how, fierce as Mars, Ulysses join'd
 With godlike Menelaus, to the house
 Flew of Deiphobus; him there engaged
 In direst fight he sang, and through the aid
 Of glorious Pallas, conqueror over all.

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So sang the bard illustrious, at whose song
 Ulysses melted, and tear after tear
 Fell on his cheeks. As when a woman weeps
 Her husband, who hath fallen in defence
 Of his own city and his babes before
 The gates; she, sinking, folds him in her arms,
 And, gazing on him as he pants and dies,
 Shrieks at the sight; meantime, the enemy
 Smiting her shoulders with the spear, to toil
 Command her and to bondage far away,
 And her cheek fades with horror at the sound;
 Ulysses, so, from his moist lids let fall
 The frequent tear. Unnoticed by the rest
 Those drops, but not by King Alcinous, fell;
 Who, seated at his side, his heavy sighs
 Remark'd, and the Phaeacians thus spake.

Phaeacian Chiefs and Senators, attend!
 Now let Demodocus enjoin his harp
 Silence, for not alike grateful to all
 His music sounds; during our feast, and since

660

The bard divine began, continual flow
 The stranger's sorrows, by remembrance caused
 Of some great woe which wraps his soul around.
 Then let the bard suspend his song, that all
 (As most befits the occasion) may rejoice, 665
 Both guest and hosts together ; since we make
 This voyage, and these gifts confer, in proof
 Of hospitality and unfeign'd love,
 Judging, with all wise men, the stranger-guest
 And suppliant worthy of a brother's place. 670
 And thou conceal not, artfully reserved,
 What I shall ask, far better plain declared
 Than smother'd close ; who art thou ? speak thy name,
 The name by which thy father, mother, friends
 And fellow-citizens, with all who dwell 675
 Around thy native city, in times past
 Have known thee ; for of all things human none
 Lives altogether nameless, whether good
 Or whether bad, but every man receives,
 Even in the moment of his birth, a name. 680
 Thy country, people, city, tell ; the mark
 At which my ships, intelligent, shall aim,
 That they may bear thee thither ; for our ships
 No pilot need or helm, as ships are wont,
 But know, themselves, our purpose ; know beside 685
 All cities, and all fruitful regions well
 Of all the earth, and with dark clouds involved
 Plough rapid the rough Deep, fearless of harm,
 (Whate'er betide) and of disastrous wreck.
 Yet thus, long since, my father I have heard 690
 Nausithoüs speaking ; Neptune, he would say,
 Is angry with us, for that safe we bear
 Strangers of every nation to their home ;
 And he foretold a time when he would smite
 In vengeance some Phœacian gallant bark 695
 Returning after convoy of her charge,
 And fix her in the sable flood, transform'd
 Into a mountain, right before the town.
 So spake my hoary Sire, which let the God
 At his own pleasure do, or leave undone. 700
 But tell me truth, and plainly. Where have been

Thy wanderings ? in what regions of the earth
Hast thou arrived ? what nations hast thou seen,
What cities ? say, how many hast thou found
Harsh, savage, and unjust ? how many, kind
To strangers, and disposed to fear the Gods ?

705

Say also, from what secret grief of heart
Thy sorrows flow, oft as thou hear'st the fate
Of the Achaians, or of Ilium sung ?

That fate the Gods prepared ; they spin the thread
Of man's destruction, that in after-days
The bard may make the sad event his theme.

710

Perish'd thy father or thy brother there ?

Or hast thou at the siege of Ilium lost

Father-in-law or son-in-law ? for such

715

Are next and dearest to us after those

Who share our own descent ; or was the dead

Thy bosom-friend, whose heart was as thy own ?

For worthy as a brother of our love

The constant friend and the discreet I deem.

720

BOOK IX.

ARGUMENT.

Ulysses discovers himself to the Phœacians, and begins the history of his adventures. He destroys Ismarus, city of the Ciconians; arrives among the Lotophagi; and afterwards at the land of the Cyclops. He is imprisoned by Polyphe me in his cave, who devours six of his companions; intoxicates the monster with wine, blinds him while he sleeps, and escapes from him.

THEN answer, thus, Ulysses wise return'd.
 Alcinoüs! King! illustrious above all
 Phœacia's sons! pleasant it is to hear
 A bard like this, sweet as the Gods in song.
 The world, in my account, no sight affords
 More gratifying, than a people blest
 With cheerfulness and peace, a palace throng'd
 With guests in order ranged, listening to sounds
 Melodious, and the steaming tables spread
 With plenteous viands, while the cups, with wine
 From brimming beakers fill'd, pass brisk around.
 No lovelier sight know I. But thou, it seems,
 Thy thoughts hast turn'd to ask me whence my groans
 And tears, that I may sorrow still the more.
 What first, what next, what last shall I rehearse,
 On whom the Gods have shower'd such various woes?
 Learn first my name, that even in this land
 Remote I may be known, and that escaped
 From all adversity, I may requite
 Hereafter this your hospitable care
 At my own home, however distant hence.
 I am Ulysses, fear'd in all the earth,
 For subtlest wisdom, and renown'd to heaven,
 The offspring of Laertes; my abode
 Is sun-burnt Ithaca; there waving stands
 The mountain Neritus his numerous boughs,

And it is neighbour'd close by clustering isles
All populous ; thence Samos is beheld,
Dulichium, and Zacynthus forest-clad.

Flat on the Deep she lies, farthest removed
Toward the West, while, situate apart,
Her sister islands face the rising day ;
Rugged she is, but fruitful nurse of sons
Magnanimous ; nor shall these eyes behold,
Elsewhere, an object dear and sweet as she.
Calypso, beauteous Goddess, in her grot
Detain'd me, wishing me her own espoused ;
Ææan Circe also, skill'd profound
In potent arts, within her palace long
Detain'd me, wishing me her own espoused ;
But never could they warp my constant mind.
So much our parents and our native soil
Attract us most, even although our lot
Be fair and plenteous in a foreign land.
But come—my painful voyage, such as Jove
Gave me from Ilium, I will now relate.

From Troy the winds bore me to Ismarus,
City of the Ciconians ; them I slew,
And laid their city waste ; whence bringing forth
Much spoil with all their wives, I portion'd it
With equal hand, and each received a share.
Next, I exhorted to immediate flight
My people ; but in vain ; they madly scorn'd
My sober counsel, and much wine they drank,
And sheep and beeves slew numerous on the shore.
Meantime, Ciconians to Ciconians call'd,
Their neighbours summoning, a mightier host
And braver, natives of the continent,
Expert, on horses mounted, to maintain
Fierce fight, or if occasion bade, on foot.
Numerous they came as leaves, or vernal flowers
At day-spring. Then by the decree of Jove,
Misfortune found us. At the ships we stood
Piercing each other with the brazen spear,
And till the morning brighten'd into noon,
Few as we were, we yet withstood them all ;
But when the sun verg'd westward, then the Greeks

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Fell back, and the Ciconian host prevail'd.
 Six warlike Grecians from each galley's crew
 Perish'd in that dread field ; the rest escaped. 70

Thus after loss of many we pursued
 Our course, yet, difficult as was our flight,
 Went not till first we had invoked by name
 Our friends whom the Ciconians had destroy'd.
 But cloud-assembler Jove assail'd us soon 75
 With a tempestuous North-wind ; earth alike
 And sea with storms he overhung, and night
 Fell fast from heaven. Their heads deep plunging oft
 Our gallies flew, and rent, and rent again
 Our tatter'd sail-cloth crackled in the wind. 80
 We, fearing instant death, within the barks
 Our canvas lodged, and toiling strenuous, reach'd
 At length the continent. Two nights we lay
 Continual there, and two long days consumed
 With toil and grief; but when the beauteous morn 85
 Bright-hair'd had brought the third day to a close,
 (Our masts erected, and white sails unfurl'd,)
 Again we sat on board ; meantime, the winds
 Well managed by the steersman, urged us on.
 And now, all danger pass'd, I had attain'd 90
 My native shore, but, doubling in my course
 Malea, waves and currents and North-winds
 Constrain'd me devious to Cythera's isle.
 Nine days by cruel storms thence was I borne
 Athwart the fishy Deep, but on the tenth 95
 Reach'd the Lotophagi, a race sustain'd
 On sweetest fruit alone. There quitting ship,
 We landed and drew water, and the crews
 Beside the vessels took their evening cheer.
 When, hasty, we had thus our strength renew'd, 100
 I order'd forth my people to inquire
 (Two I selected from the rest, with whom
 I join'd an herald, third), what race of men
 Might there inhabit. They, departing, mix'd
 With the Lotophagi ; nor hostile aught 105
 Or savage the Lotophagi devised
 Against our friends, but offer'd to their taste
 The lotus ; of which fruit what man soe'er

Once tasted, no desire felt he to come
 With tidings back, or seek his country more,
 But rather wish'd to feed on lotus still
 With the Lotophagi, and to renounce
 All thoughts of home. Them, therefore, I constrain'd
 Weeping on board, and dragging each beneath
 The benches, bound him there. Then, all in haste,
 I urged my people to ascend again
 Their hollow barks, lest others also, fed
 With fruit of lotus, should forget their home.
 They quick embark'd, and on the benches ranged
 In order, thresh'd with oars the foamy flood.

110

Thence, o'er the Deep proceeding sad, we reach'd.

The land at length, where, giant-sized and free
 From all constraint of law, the Cyclops dwell.
 They, trusting to the Gods, plant not, or plough,
 But earth unsow'd, untill'd, brings forth for them
 All fruits, wheat, barley, and the vinous grape
 Large-cluster'd, nourish'd by the showers of Jove.
 No councils they convene, no laws contrive,
 But in deep caverns dwell, found on the heads
 Of lofty mountains, judging each supreme
 His wife and children, heedless of the rest.

115

In front of the Cyclopean haven lies
 A level island, not adjoining close
 Their land, nor yet remote, woody and rude.
 There, wild-goats breed numberless, by no foot
 Of man molested ; never huntsman there,
 Inured to winter's cold and hunger, roams
 The dreary woods, or mountain-tops sublime ;
 No fleecy flocks dwell there, nor plough is known,
 But the unseeded and unfurrow'd soil,
 Year after year a wilderness by man
 Untrodden, food for blatant goats supplies.
 For no ships crimson-prow'd the Cyclops own,
 Nor naval artizan is there, whose toil
 Might furnish them with oary barks, by which
 Subsists all distant commerce, and which bear
 Man o'er the Deep to cities far remote
 Who might improve the peopled isle, that seems

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¹ So the Scholium interprets in this place the word *ὑπερφιαλος*.

Not sterile in itself, but apt to yield,
In their due season, fruits of every kind. 150
For stretch'd beside the hoary ocean lie
Green meadows moist, where vines would never fail ; .
Light is the land, and they might yearly reap
The tallest crops, so unctuous is the glebe.
Safe is its haven also, where no need 155
Of cable is or anchor, or to lash
The hawser fast ashore, but pushing in
His bark, the mariner might there abide
Till rising gales should tempt him forth again.
At bottom of the bay runs a clear stream 160
Issuing from a cove hemm'd all around
With poplars ; down into that bay we steer'd
Amid the darkness of the night, some God
Conducting us ; for all unseen it lay,
Such gloom involved the fleet, nor shone the moon 165
From heaven to light us, veil'd by pitchy clouds.
Hence, none the isle descried, nor any saw
The lofty surge roll'd on the strand, or ere
Our vessels struck the ground ; but when they struck,
Then, lowering all our sails, we disembark'd, 170
And on the sea-beach slept till dawn appear'd.
Soon as Aurora, daughter of the dawn,
Look'd rosy forth, we with admiring eyes
The isle survey'd, roaming it wide around.
Meantime, the nymphs, Jove's daughters, roused the goats 175
Bred on the mountains, to supply with food
The partners of my toils ; then, bringing forth
Bows and long-pointed-javelins from the ships,
Divided all into three separate bands
We struck them, and the Gods gave us much prey. 180
Twelve ships attended me, and every ship
Nine goats received by lot ; myself alone
Selected ten. All day, till set of sun,
We sat eating goat's flesh, and drinking wine
Delicious without stint ; for dearth was none 185
Of ruddy wine on board, but much remain'd,
With which my people had their jars supplied
What time we sack'd Ciconian Ismarus.
Thence looking forth toward the neighbour-land

Where dwell the Cyclops, rising smoke we saw,
And voices heard, their own, and of their flocks.
Now sank the sun, and (night o'ershadowing all)
We slept along the shore; but when again,
The rosy-finger'd daughter of the dawn
Look'd forth, my crews convened, I thus began.

190

Companions of my course! here rest ye all,
Save my own crew, with whom I will explore
This people, whether wild they be, unjust,
And to contention given, or well-disposed
To strangers, and a race who fear the Gods.

200

So speaking, I embark'd, and bade embark
My followers, throwing, quick, the hawsers loose.
They, entering at my word, the benches fill'd
Well-ranged, and thresh'd with oars the foamy flood.
Attaining soon that neighbour-land, we found
At its extremity, fast by the sea,
A cavern, lofty, and dark-brow'd above
With laurels; in that cavern slumbering lay
Much cattle, sheep and goats, and a broad court
Enclosed it, fenced with stones from quarries hewn,
With spiry firs, and oaks of ample bough.

210

Here dwelt a giant vast, who far remote
His flocks fed solitary, converse none
Desiring, sullen, savage, and unjust.
Monster, in truth, he was, hideous in form,
Resembling less a man by Ceres' gift
Sustain'd, than some aspiring mountain-crag
Tufted with wood, and standing all alone.
Enjoining, then, my people to abide
Fast by the ship which they should closely guard,
I went; but not without a goat-skin fill'd
With sable wine which I had erst received
From Maron, offspring of Evanthes, priest
Of Phœbus guardian god of Ismarus,
Because through reverence of him, we had saved
Himself, his wife and children; for he dwelt
Amid the grove umbrageous of his God.
He gave me, therefore, noble gifts; from him
Seven talents I received of beaten gold,
A beaker, argent all, and after these

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No fewer than twelve jars with wine replete,
Rich, unadulterate, drink for Gods ; nor knew.
One servant, male or female, of that wine
In all his house ; none knew it, save himself,
His wife, and the intendant of his stores. 235

Oft as they drank that luscious juice, he slaked
A single cup with twenty from the stream,
And, even then, the beaker breath'd abroad
A scent celestial, which whoever smelt,
Thenceforth no pleasure found it to abstain. 240

Charged with an ample goat-skin of this wine
I went, and with a wallet well supplied,
But felt a sudden presage in my soul
That, haply, with terrific force endued,
Some savage would appear, strange to the laws 245
And privileges of the human race.

Few steps convey'd us to his den, but him
We found not ; he his flocks pastured abroad.
His cavern entering, we with wonder gazed
Around on all ; his strainers hung with cheese
Distended wide ; with lambs and kids his pens 250

Close-throng'd we saw, and folded separate
The various charge ; the eldest all apart,
Apart the middle-aged, and the new-yean'd
Also apart. His pails and bowls with whey
Swam all, neat vessels into which he milk'd. 255

Me then my friends first importuned to take
A portion of his cheeses, then to drive
Forth from the sheep-cotes to the rapid bark
His kids and lambs, and plough the brine again.
But me they moved not, happier had they moved ! 260

I wish'd to see him, and to gain, perchance,
Some pledge of hospitality at his hands,
Whose form was such, as should not much bespeak,
When he appear'd, our confidence or love. 265

Then, kindling fire we offer'd to the Gods,
And of his cheeses eating, patient sat
Till home he trudged from pasture. Charged he came
With dry wood bundled, an enormous load,
Fuel by which to sup. Loud crash'd the thorns 270
Which down he cast before the cavern's mouth,

To whose interior nooks we trembling flew.
 At once he drove into his spacious cave
 His batten'd flock, all those which gave him milk,
 But all the males, both rams and goats, he left
 Abroad, excluded from the cavern-yard. 275
 Upheaving, next, a rocky barrier huge
 To his cave's mouth, he thrust it home. That weight
 Not all the oxen from its place had moved
 Of twenty and two wains; with such a rock
 Immense his den he closed. Then down he sat, 280
 And as he milk'd his ewes and bleating goats
 All in their turns, her yeanling gave to each;
 Coagulating, then, with brisk dispatch,
 The half of his new milk, he thrust the curd
 Into his wicker sieves, but stored the rest
 In pans and bowls—his customary drink.
 His labours thus perform'd, he kindled, last,
 His fuel, and discerning us, enquired,

Who are ye, strangers? from what distant shore
 Roam ye the waters? traffic ye? or bound
 To no one port, wander, as pirates use,
 At large the Deep, exposing life themselves,
 And enemies of all mankind beside?

He ceased; we, dash'd with terror, heard the growl
 Of his big voice, and view'd his form uncouth,
 To whom, though sore-appall'd, I thus replied.

Of Greece are we, and, bound from Ilium home,
 Have wander'd wide the expanse of ocean, sport
 For every wind, and driven from our course,
 Have here arrived; so stood the will of Jove. 300
 We boast ourselves of Agamemnon's train,
 The son of Atreus, at this hour the Chief
 Beyond all others under heaven renown'd,
 So great a city he hath sack'd, and slain
 Such numerous foes; but since we reach, at last, 305
 Thy knees, we beg such hospitable fare,
 Or other gift, as guests are wont to obtain.
 Illustrious lord! respect the Gods, and us
 Thy suitors; suppliants are the care of Jove
 The hospitable; he their wrongs resents, 310
 And where the stranger sojourns, there is he.

I ceased, when answer thus he, fierce, return'd.
 Friend ! either thou art fool, or hast arrived
 Indeed from far, who bidd'st me fear the Gods
 Lest they be wroth. The Cyclops little heeds
 Jove ægis-arm'd, or all the Powers of Heaven.
 Our race is mightier far ; nor shall myself,
 Through fear of Jove's hostility, abstain
 From thee or thine, unless my choice be such. 315
 But tell me now. Where touch'd thy gallant bark
 Our country, on thy first arrival here ?
 Remote or nigh ? for I would learn the truth.
 So spake he, tempting me ; but, artful, thus
 I answer'd, penetrating his intent. 320
 My vessel, Neptune, Shaker of the shores,
 At yonder utmost promontory dash'd
 In pieces, hurling her against the rocks
 With winds that blew right thither from the sea,
 And I, with these alone, escaped alive. 325
 So I, to whom, relentless, answer none
 He deign'd, but, with his arms extended, sprang
 Toward my people, of whom seizing two
 At once, like whelps against his cavern-floor
 He dash'd them, and their brains spread on the ground. 335
 These, piece-meal hewn, for supper he prepared,
 And, like a mountain-lion, neither flesh
 Nor entrails left, nor yet their marrowy bones.
 We, viewing that tremendous sight, upraised
 Our hands to Jove, all hope and courage lost
 When thus the Cyclops had with human flesh
 Fill'd his capacious belly, and had quaff'd
 Much undiluted milk, among his flocks
 Outstretch'd immense, he press'd his cavern-floor.
 Me, then, my courage prompted to approach
 The monster with my sword drawn from the sheath,
 And to transfix him where the vitals wrap
 The liver ; but maturer thoughts forbade.
 For so, we also had incur'd a death
 Tremendous, wanting power to thrust aside
 The rocky mass that closed his cavern-mouth
 By force of hand alone. Thus many a sigh
 Heaving, we watch'd the dawn. But when, at length,

Aurora, day-spring's daughter rosy-palm'd
 Look'd forth, then kindling fire, his flocks he milk'd 355
 In order, and her yearning kid or lamb
 Thrust under each. When thus he had perform'd
 His wonted task, two seizing, as before,
 He slew them for his next obscene regale.
 His dinner ended, from the cave he drove 360
 His fatted flocks abroad, moving with ease
 That ponderous barrier, and replacing it
 As he had only closed a quiver's lid.
 Then, hissing them along, he drove his flocks
 Toward the mountain, and me left, the while, 365
 Deep ruminating how I best might take
 Vengeance, and by the aid of Pallas win
 Deathless renown. This counsel pleased me most.
 Beside the sheep-cote lay a massy club
 Hewn by the Cyclops from an olive stock, 370
 Green, but which dried, should serve him for a staff.
 To us, considering it, that staff appear'd
 Tall as the mast of a huge trading-bark,
 Impell'd by twenty rowers o'er the Deep.
 Such seem'd its length to us, and such its bulk. 375
 Part amputating, (an whole fathom's length)
 I gave my men that portion, with command
 To shave it smooth. They smooth'd it, and myself,
 Shaping its blunt extremity to a point,
 Season'd it in the fire ; then covering close 380
 The weapon, hid it under litter'd straw,
 For much lay scatter'd on the cavern-floor.
 And now I bade my people cast the lot
 Who of us all should take the pointed brand,
 And grind it in his eye when next he slept. 385
 The lots were cast, and four were chosen, those
 Whom most I wished, and I was chosen fifth.
 At even-tide he came, his fleecy flocks
 Pasturing homeward, and compell'd them all
 Into his cavern, leaving none abroad, 390
 Either through some surmise, or so inclined
 By influence, haply, of the Gods themselves.
 The huge rock pull'd into his place again
 At the cave's mouth, he sitting, milk'd his sheep

And goats in order, and her kid or lamb
395
Thrust under each ; thus, all his work dispatch'd,
Two more he seized, and to his supper fell.
I then approaching to him, thus address'd
The Cyclops, holding in my hand a cup
Of ivy-wood, well-charged with ruddy wine. 400

Lo, Cyclops ! this is wine. Take this and drink
After thy meal of man's flesh. Taste and learn
What precious liquor our lost vessel bore.
I brought it hither, purposing to make
Liberation to thee, if to pity inclined 405
Thou wouldst dismiss us home. But, ah, thy rage
Is insupportable ! thou cruel one !
Who, thinkest thou, of all mankind, henceforth
Will visit *thee* guilty of such excess ?

I ceased. He took and drank, and ²hugely pleased
410
With that delicious beverage, thus enquired.

Give me again, and spare not. Tell me, too,
Thy name, incontinent, that I may make
Requital, gratifying also thee
With somewhat to thy taste. We Cyclops own 415
A bounteous soil, which yields *us* also wine
From clusters large, nourish'd by showers from Jove ;
But this—oh this is from above—a stream
Of nectar and ambrosia, all divine !

He ended, and received a second draught,
420
Like measure. Thrice I bore it to his hand,
And, foolish, thrice he drank. But when the fumes
Began to play around the Cyclops' brain,
With show of amity I thus replied.

Cyclops ! thou hast my noble name enquired,
425
Which I will tell thee. Give me, in return,
Thy promised boon, some hospitable pledge.
My name is Outis³ ; Outis I am call'd

² Αὐωνός.

³ Clarke, who has preserved this name in his marginal version, contends strenuously, and with great reason, that Outis ought not to be translated ; and in a passage which he quotes from the *Acta eruditorum*, we see much fault found with Giphanius and other interpreters of Homer for having translated it. It is certain that in Homer the word is declined not as *ετιγ-τινος*, which signifies no man, but as *ετιγ-τινος*, making *ετιν*

At home, abroad, wherever I am known.

So I ; to whom he, savage, thus replied.
Outis, when I have eaten all his friends,
Shall be my last regale. Be that thy boon.

He spake, and downward sway'd, fell resupine,
With his huge neck aslant. All-conquering sleep
Soon seized him. From his gullet gush'd the wine
With human morsels mingled, many a blast
Sonorous issuing from his glutted maw.
Then thrusting far the spike of olive-wood
Into the embers glowing on the hearth,
I heated it, and cheer'd my friends, the while,
Lest any should, through fear, shrink from his part.
But when that stake of olive-wood, though green,
Should soon have flamed, for it was glowing hot,
I bore it to his side. Then all my aids
Around me gather'd, and the Gods infused
Heroic fortitude into our hearts.

They, seizing the hot stake rasp'd to a point,
Bored his eye with it, and myself, advanced
To a superior stand, twirl'd it about.

As when a shipwright with his wimble bores
Tough oaken timber, placed on either side
Below, his fellow-artists strain the thong
Alternate, and the restless iron spins,
So, grasping hard the stake pointed with fire,
We twirl'd it in his eye ; the bubbling blood
Boil'd round about the brand ; his pupil sent
A scalding vapour forth that singed his brow,
And all his eye-roots crackled in the flame.

As when the smith an hatchet or large axe
Tempering with skill, plunges the hissing blade
Deep in cold-water, (whence the strength of steel),
So hiss'd his eye around the olive-wood.

The howling monster with his outcry fill'd
The hollow rock, and I, with all my aids,
Fled terrified. He, plucking forth the spike

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in the accusative, consequently as a proper name. It is sufficient that the ambiguity was such as to deceive the friends of the Cyclops. Outis is said by some (perhaps absurdly) to have been a name given to Ulysses on account of his having larger ears than common.

From his burnt socket, mad with anguish, cast
The implement all bloody far away.

Then, bellowing, he sounded forth the name
Of every Cyclops dwelling in the caves
Around him, on the wind-swept mountain-tops ; 470
They at his cry flocking from every part,
Circled his den, and of his ail enquired.

What grievous hurt hath caused thee, Polypheme !
Thus yelling to alarm the peaceful ear
Of night, and break our slumbers ? Fear'st thou lest 475
Some mortal man drive off thy flocks ? or fear'st
Thyself to die by cunning or by force ?

Them answer'd then, Polypheme from his cave.
Oh, friends ! I die, and Outis gives the blow.

To whom with accents wing'd his friends without. 480
If no man ⁴ harm thee, but thou art alone,
And sickness feel'st, it is the stroke of Jove,
And thou must bear it ; yet invoke for aid
Thy father Neptune, Sovereign of the floods.

So saying, they went, and in my heart I laugh'd 485
That by the fiction only of a name,
Slight stratagem ! I had deceived them all.

Then groan'd the Cyclops wrung with pain and grief,
And, fumbling with stretch'd hands, removed the rock
From his cave's mouth, which done, he sat him down 490
Spreading his arms athwart the pass, to stop
Our egress with his flocks abroad ; so dull,
It seems, he held me, and so ill-advised.

I, pondering what means might fittest prove
To save from instant death (if save I might) 495
My people and myself, to every shift
Inclined, and various counsels framed, as one
Who strove for life, conscious of woe at hand.
To me, thus meditating, this appear'd
The likeliest course. The rams well-thriven were
Thick-fleeced, full-sized, with wool of sable hue. 500
These, silently, with osier twigs on which

⁴ Outis, as a *name*, could only denote him who bore it ; but as a *noun*, it signifies *no man*, which accounts sufficiently for the ludicrous mistake of his brethren.

The Cyclops, hideous monster, slept, I bound,
Three in one leash ; the intermediate rams
Bore each a man, whom the exterior two
Preserved, concealing him on either side.

505

Thus each was borne by three, and I, at last,
The curl'd back seizing of a ram, (for one
I had reserved far stateliest of them all)
Slipp'd underneath his belly, and both hands
Enfolding fast in his exuberant fleece,
Clung ceaseless to him as I lay supine.

510

We, thus disposed, waited with many a sigh
The sacred dawn ; but when, at length, arisen,
Aurora, day-spring's daughter rosy-palm'd,
Again appear'd, the males of all his flocks
Rush'd forth to pasture, and his ewes the while
Stood bleating, unrelieved from the distress
Of udders overcharged. Their master, rack'd
With pain intolerable, handled yet

515

The backs of all, inquisitive, as they stood,
But, gross of intellect, suspicion none
Conceived of men beneath their bodies bound.
And now (none left beside) the ram approach'd
With his own wool burthen'd, and with myself,
Whom many a fear molested. Polypheme
The giant strok'd him as he sat, and said,

525

My darling ram ! why, latest of the flock
Comest thou, whom never, heretofore, my sheep
Could leave behind, but stalking at their head,
Thou first was wont to crop the tender grass,
First to arrive at the clear stream, and first
With ready will to seek my sheep-cote here
At evening ; but, thy practice changed, thou comest
Now last of all. Feel'st thou regret, my ram !

530

Of thy poor master's eye, by a vile wretch
Bored out, who overcame me first with wine,
And by a crew of vagabonds accursed,
Followers of Outis, whose escape from death
Shall not be made to-day ? Ah ! that thy heart
Were as my own, and that distinct as I
Thou couldst articulate, so shouldst thou tell,

535

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Where hidden, he eludes my furious wrath.
Then dash'd against the floor his spatter'd brain
Should fly, and I should lighter feel my harm
From Outis, wretch base-named and nothing-worth.

545

So saying, he left him to pursue the flock.
When thus drawn forth, we had, at length, escaped
Few paces from the cavern and the court,
First, quitting my own ram, I loosed my friends,
Then, turning seaward many a thriven ewe
Sharp-hoof'd, we drove them swiftly to the ship.
Thrice welcome to our faithful friends we came
From death escaped, but much they mourn'd the dead.
I suffer'd not their tears, but silent shook

550

My brows, by signs commanding them to lift
The sheep on board, and instant plough the main.
They, quick embarking, on the benches sat
Well ranged, and thresh'd with oars the foamy flood ;
But distant now such length as a loud voice
May reach, I hail'd with taunts the Cyclops' ear.

560

Cyclops ! when thou devouredst in thy cave
With brutal force my followers, thou devour'dst
The followers of no timid Chief, or base.

Vengeance was sure to recompense that deed
Atrocious. Monster ! who wast not afraid
To eat the guest shelter'd beneath thy roof !
Therefore the Gods have well requited thee.

565

I ended ; he, exasperate, raged the more,
And rending from its hold a mountain-top,
Hurl'd it toward us ; at our vessel's stern
Down came the mass, nigh sweeping in its fall
The rudder's head. The ocean, at the plunge
Of that huge rock, high on his refluent flood
Heaved, irresistible, the ship to land.

570

I seizing, quick, our longest pole on board,
Back thrust her from the coast, and by a nod
In silence given, bid my companions ply
Strenuous their oars, that so we might escape.
Procumbent, each obey'd, and when, the flood

575

⁵ *προπεσοντες.*

Procumbunt.

Olli certamine summo

VIRGIL.

Cleaving⁶, we twice that distance had obtain'd,
Again I hail'd the Cyclops ; but my friends
Earnest dissuaded me on every side.

Ah, rash Ulysses ! why with taunts provoke
The savage more, who hath this moment hurl'd
A weapon, such as heaved the ship again
To land, where death seem'd certain to us all ?
For had he heard a cry, or but the voice
Of one man speaking, he had all our heads
With some sharp rock, and all our timbers crush'd
Together, such vast force is in his arm.

So they, but my courageous heart remain'd
Unmoved, and thus again, incensed, I spake.

Cyclops ! should any mortal man inquire
To whom thy shameful loss of sight thou owest,
Say, to Ulysses, city-waster Chief,
Laertes' son, native of Ithaca.

I ceased, and with a groan thus he replied.
Ah me ! an ancient oracle I feel

Accomplish'd. Here abode a prophet erst,
A man of noblest form, and in his art
Unrivall'd, Telemus Euryomedes.

He, prophesying to the Cyclops-race,
Grew old among us, and presaged my loss
Of sight, in future, by Ulysses' hand.

I therefore watch'd for the arrival here,
Always, of some great Chief, for stature, bulk,
And beauty praised, and clothed with wonderous might.
But now—a dwarf, a thing impalpable,

A shadow, overcame me first by wine,
Then quench'd my sight. Come hither, O my guest !
Return, Ulysses ! hospitable cheer

Awaits thee, and my prayers I will prefer
To glorious Neptune for thy prosperous course ;
For I am Neptune's offspring, and the God

Is proud to be my Sire ; he, if he please,
And he alone can heal me ; none beside
Of Powers Immortal, or of men below.

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⁶ The seeming incongruity of this line with line 560, is reconciled by supposing that Ulysses exerted his voice, naturally loud, in an extraordinary manner on this second occasion. See Clarke.

He spake, to whom I answer thus return'd.
 I would that of my life and soul amerced,
 I could as sure dismiss thee down to Hell,
 As none shall heal thy eye—not even He.

So I ; then pray'd the Cyclops to his Sire
 With hands upraised toward the starry heaven.

Hear, Earth-encircler Neptune, azure-hair'd !
 If I indeed am thine, and if thou boast
 Thyself my father, grant that never more
 Ulysses, leveller of hostile towers,
 Laertes' son, of Ithaca the fair,
 Behold his native home ! but if his fate
 Decree him yet to see his friends, his house,
 His native country, let him deep-distress'd
 Return and late, all his companions lost,
 Indebted for a ship to foreign aid,
 And let affliction meet him at his door.

He spake, and Ocean's sovereign heard his prayer.
 Then lifting from the shore a stone of size
 Far more enormous, o'er his head he whirl'd
 The rock, and his immeasurable force
 Exerting all, dismiss'd it. Close behind
 The ship, nor distant from the rudder's head,
 Down came the mass. The ocean at the plunge
 Of such a weight, high on its refluent flood
 Tumultuous, heaved the bark well-nigh to land.

But when we reach'd the isle where we had left
 Our numerous barks, and where my people sat
 Watching with ceaseless sorrow our return,
 We thrust our vessel to the sandy shore,
 Then disembark'd, and of the Cyclops' sheep
 Gave equal share to all. To me alone
 My fellow-voyagers the ram consign'd
 In distribution, my peculiar meed.
 Him, therefore, to cloud-girt Saturnian Jove
 I offer'd on the shore, burning his thighs
 In sacrifice ; but Jove my hallow'd rites
 Reck'd not, destruction purposing to all
 My barks, and all my followers o'er the Deep.
 Thus, feasting largely, on the shore we sat

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Till even-tide, and quaffing generous wine ;
But when day fail'd, and night o'ershadow'd all,
Then on the shore we slept ; and when again
Aurora, rosy daughter of the Dawn,
Look'd forth, my people, anxious, I enjoin'd
To climb their barks, and cast the hawsers loose.
They, all obedient, took their seats on board
Well-ranged, and thresh'd with oars the foamy flood.
Thus, 'scaping narrowly, we roam'd the Deep
With aching hearts, and with diminish'd crews.

660

665

BOOK X.

ARGUMENT.

Ulysses, in pursuit of his narrative, relates his arrival at the island of Æolus, his departure thence, and the unhappy occasion of his return thither. The monarch of the winds dismisses him at last with much asperity. He next tells of his arrival among the Læstrygonians, by whom his whole fleet, together with their crews, are destroyed, his own ship and crew excepted. Thence he is driven to the island of Circe. By her the half of his people are transformed into swine. Assisted by Mercury, he resists her enchantments himself, and prevails with the Goddess to recover them to their former shape. In consequence of Circe's instructions, after having spent a complete year in her palace, he prepares for a voyage to the infernal regions.

WE came to the Æolian isle ; there dwells
 Æolus, son of Hippotas, beloved
 By the Immortals, in an isle afloat.
 A brazen wall impregnable on all sides
 Girds it, and smooth its rocky coast ascends. 5
 His children in his own fair palace born,
 Are twelve ; six daughters, and six blooming sons.
 He gave his daughters to his sons to wife ;
 They with their father hold perpetual feast
 And with their royal mother, still supplied
 With dainties numberless ; the sounding dome
 Is fill'd with savoury odours all the day,
 And with their consorts chaste at night they sleep
 On stateliest couches with rich arras spread.
 Their city and their splendid courts we reach'd. 15
 A month complete he, friendly, at his board
 Regaled me, and enquiry made minute
 Of Ilium's fall, of the Achaian fleet,
 And of our voyage thence. I told him all.
 But now, desirous to embark again,
 I ask'd dismission home, which he approved, 20

And well provided for my prosperous course.
 He gave me, furnished by a bullock flay'd
 In his ninth year, a bag ; every rude blast
 Which from its bottom turns the Deep, that bag
 Imprison'd held ; for him Saturnian Jove
 Hath officed arbiter of all the winds,
 To rouse their force, or calm them, at his will.
 He gave me them on board my bark, so bound
 With silver twine that not a breath escaped,
 Then order'd gentle Zephyrus to fill
 Our sails propitious. Order vain, alas !
 So fatal proved the folly of my friends.

Nine days continual, night and day we sail'd,
 And on the tenth my native land appear'd.
 Not far remote my Ithacans I saw
 Fires kindling on the coast ; but me with toil
 Worn, and with watching, gentle sleep subdued ;
 For constant I had ruled the helm, nor given
 That charge to any, fearful of delay.
 Then, in close conference combined, my crew
 Each other thus bespeak—He carries home
 Silver and gold from Aeolus received,
 Offspring of Hippotas, illustrious Chief ;
 And thus a mariner the rest harangued.

Ye Gods ! what city or what land soe'er
 Ulysses visits, how he is beloved
 By all, and honour'd ! many precious spoils
 He homeward bears from Troy ; but we return,
 (We who the self-same voyage have perform'd,) 50
 With empty hands. Now also he hath gain'd
 This pledge of friendship from the Kings of winds.
 But come—be quick—search we the bag and learn
 What stores of gold and silver it contains.

So he, whose mischievous advice prevail'd.
 They loosed the bag ; forth issued all the winds,
 And caught by tempests o'er the billowy waste,
 Weeping they flew, far, far from Ithaca.
 I then, awaking, in my noble mind
 Stood doubtful, whether from my vessel's side
 Immersed to perish in the flood, or calm
 To endure my sorrows, and consent to live.

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I calm endured them ; but around my head
Winding my mantle, laid me down below,
While adverse blasts bore all my fleet again
To the *Æolian* isle ; then groan'd my people.

65

We disembark'd and drew fresh water there,
And my companions, at their galley's sides
All seated took repast ; short meal we made,
When with an herald and a chosen friend
I sought once more the hall of *Æolus*.

70

Him banqueting with all his sons we found,
And with his spouse ; we, entering, on the floor
Of his wide portal sat, whom they amazed
Beheld, and of our coming thus enquired.

75

Return'd ? Ulysses ! by what adverse Power
Repulsed hast thou arrived ? we sent thee hence
Well-fitted forth to reach thy native isle,
Thy palace, or what place soe'er thou would'st.

So they—to whom, heart-broken, I replied,
My worthless crew have wrong'd me, nor alone
My worthless crew, but sleep ill-timed, as much.
Yet heal, O friends, my hurt ; the power is yours !

80

So I their favour woo'd. Mute sat the sons,
But thus their father answer'd. Hence—begone—
Leave this our isle, thou most obnoxious wretch
Of all mankind. I should, myself, transgress,
Receiving here, and giving conduct hence
To one detested by the Gods as thou.

85

Away—for hated by the Gods thou comest.

90

So saying, he sent me from his palace forth,
Groaning profound ; thence, therefore, o'er the Deep
We still proceeded sorrowful, our force
Exhausting ceaseless at the toilsome oar,
And through our own imprudence, hopeless now
Of other furtherance to our native isle.

95

Six days we navigated, day and night,
The briny flood, and on the seventh reach'd
The city erst by Lamus built sublime,
Proud *Laestrigonia*, with the distant gates.

100

¹ The herdsman, there, driving his cattle home,

¹ It is supposed by Eustathius that the pastures being infested by gadflies and other noxious insects in the day-time, they drove their sheep

Summons the shepherd with his flocks abroad.
The sleepless there might double wages earn,
Attending, now, the herds, now tending sheep,
For the night-pastures, and the pastures grazed
By day, close border, both, the city-walls.

105

To that illustrious port we came, by rocks
Uninterrupted flank'd on either side
Of towering height, while prominent the shores
And bold, converging at the haven's mouth
Leave narrow pass. We push'd our galleys in,
Then moor'd them side by side ; for never surge
There lifts its head, or great or small, but clear
We found, and motionless, the shelter'd flood.

110

Myself alone, staying my bark without,
Secured her well with hawsers to a rock
At the land's point, then climb'd the rugged steep,
And spying stood the country. Labours none
Of men or oxen in the land appear'd,
Nor aught beside saw we, but from the earth
Smoke rising ; therefore of my friends I sent
Before me two, adding an herald third,
To learn what race of men that country fed.

120

Departing, they an even track pursued
Made by the waggons bringing timber down
From the high mountains to the town below.
Before the town a virgin bearing forth
Her ewer they met, daughter of him who ruled
The Læstrygonian race, Antiphatas.

125

Descending from the gate she sought the fount
Artacia ; for their custom was to draw
From that pure fountain for the city's use.
Approaching they accosted her, and ask'd
What king reigned there, and over whom he reign'd.
She gave them soon to know where stood sublime
The palace of her Sire ; no sooner they
The palace enter'd, than within they found,
In size resembling an huge mountain-top,

130

135

a-field in the morning, which by their wool were defended from them,
and their cattle in the evening, when the insects had withdrawn. It is
one of the few passages in Homer that must lie at the mercy of con-
jecture.

A woman, whom they shudder'd to behold.
 She forth from council summon'd quick her spouse
 Antiphatas, who teeming came with thoughts
 Of carnage, and arriving seized at once
 A Grecian, whom, next moment, he devoured.
 With headlong terror the surviving two
 Fled to the ships. Then sent Antiphatas 140
 His voice through all the town, and on all sides,
 Hearing that cry, the Læstrygonians flock'd
 Numberless, and in size resembling more
 The giants than mankind. They from the rocks
 Cast down into our fleet enormous stones, 150
 A strong man's burden each; dire din arose
 Of shatter'd galleys and of dying men,
 Whom spear'd like fishes to their home they bore,
 A loathsome prey. While them within the port
 They slaughter'd, I (the faulchion at my side 155
 Drawn forth) cut loose the hawser of my ship,
 And all my crew enjoin'd, with bosoms laid,
 Prone on their oars, to fly the threaten'd woe.
 They, dreading instant death, tugg'd resupine
 Together, and the galley from beneath 160
 Those ²beetling rocks into the open sea
 Shot gladly; but the rest all perish'd there.
 Proceeding thence, we sigh'd, and roam'd the waves,
 Glad that we lived, but sorrowing for the slain.
 We came to the *Ææan* isle; there dwelt 165
 The awful Circe, Goddess amber-hair'd,
 Deep skill'd in magic song, sister by birth
 Of the all-wise *Æætes*; them the Sun,
 Bright luminary of the world, begat
 On Perse, daughter of Oceanus. 170
 Our vessel there, noiseless, we push'd to land
 Within a spacious haven, thither led
 By some celestial Power. We disembark'd,
 And on the coast two days and nights entire
 Extended lay, worn with long toil, and each 175
 The victim of his heart-devouring woes.
 Then with my spear, and with my faulchion arm'd,
 I left the ship to climb with hasty steps

² The word has the authority of Shakespeare, and signifies overhanging.

An airy height, thence hoping to espy
Some works of man, or hear, perchance, a voice. 180

Exalted on a rough rock's craggy point
I stood, and on the distant plain, beheld
Smoke which from Circe's palace through the gloom
Of trees and thickets rose. That smoke discern'd,
I ponder'd next if thither I should haste, 185
Seeking intelligence. Long time I mused,
But chose at last, as my discreeter course,
To seek the sea-beach and my bark again,
And, when my crew had eaten, to dispatch
Before me others, who should first enquire. 190

But, ere I yet had reach'd my gallant bark,
Some God with pity viewing me alone
In that untrodden solitude, sent forth
An antler'd stag full-sized into my path.
His woodland pastures left, he sought the stream, 195
For he was thirsty, and already parch'd
By the sun's heat. Him issuing from his haunt,
Sheer through the back, beneath his middle spine,
I wounded, and the lance sprang forth beyond.
Moaning he fell, and in the dust expired. 200

Then treading on his breathless trunk, I pluck'd
My weapon forth, which leaving there reclined,
I tore away the osiers with my hands
And sallows green, and to a fathom's length
Twisting the gather'd twigs into a band, 205
Bound fast the feet of my enormous prey,
And, slinging him athwart my neck, repair'd
Toward my sable bark, propp'd on my lance,
Which now to carry shoulder'd as before
Surpass'd my power, so bulky was the load. 210

Arriving at the ship, there I let fall
My burthen, and with pleasant speech and kind,
Man after man addressing, cheer'd my crew.
My friends! we suffer much, but shall not seek
The shades, ere yet our destined hour arrive. 215

Behold a feast! and we have wine on board;—
Pine not with needless famine; rise and eat.
I spake; they readily obey'd, and each
Issuing at my word abroad, beside

The galley stood, admiring, as he lay, 220
 The stag, for of no common bulk was he.
 At length, their eyes gratified to the full
 With that glad spectacle, they laved their hands,
 And preparation made of noble cheer.
 That day complete, till set of sun, we spent 225
 Feasting deliciously without restraint,
 And quaffing generous wine : but when the sun
 Went down, and darkness overshadow'd all,
 Extended then on Ocean's bank we lay ;
 And when Aurora, daughter of the dawn, 230
 Look'd rosy forth, convening all my crew
 To council, I arose, and thus began.
 My fellow-voyagers, however worn
 With numerous hardships, hear ! for neither West 235
 Know we, nor East, where rises, or where sets
 The all-enlight'ning sun. But let us think,
 If thought perchance may profit us, of which
 Small hope I see ; for when I lately climb'd
 Yon craggy rock, plainly I could discern
 The land encompass'd by the boundless Deep. 240
 The isle is flat, and in the midst I saw
 Dun smoke ascending from an oaken bower.
 So I, whom hearing, they all courage lost,
 And at remembrance of Antiphatas
 The Læstrygonian, and the Cyclops' deeds, 245
 Ferocious feeder on the flesh of man,
 Mourn'd loud and wept, but tears could nought avail.
 Then, numbering man by man, I parted them
 In equal portions, and assign'd a Chief
 To either band, myself to these, to those 250
 Godlike Eurylochus. This done, we cast
 The lots into the helmet, and at once
 Forth sprang the lot of bold Eurylochus.
 He went, and with him of my people march'd
 Twenty and two, all weeping ; nor ourselves 255
 Wept less, at separation from our friends.
 Low in a vale, but on an open spot,
 They found the splendid house of Circe, built
 With hewn and polish'd stones ; compass'd she dwelt
 By lions on all sides and mountain-wolves 260

Tamed by herself with drugs of noxious powers.
 Nor were they mischievous, but as my friends
 Approach'd, arising on their hinder feet,
 Paw'd them in blandishment, and wagg'd the tail.

As, when from feast he rises, dogs around

265

Their master fawn, accustom'd to receive

The sop conciliatory from his hand,

Around my people, so, those talon'd wolves

And lions fawn'd. They, terrified, that troop

Of savage monsters horrible beheld.

270

And now before the Goddess' gates arrived,

They heard the voice of Circe singing sweet

Within, while, busied at the loom, she wove

An ample web immortal, such a work

Transparent, graceful, and of bright design

275

As hands of Goddesses alone produce.

Thus then Polites, Prince of men, the friend

Highest in my esteem, the rest bespake.

Ye hear the voice, comrades, of one who weaves

An ample web within, and at her task

280

So sweetly chaunts that all the marble floor

Re-echoes; human be she or divine

I doubt, but let us call, that we may learn.

He ceased; they call'd; soon issuing at the sound,

The Goddess open'd wide her splendid gates,

285

And bade them in; they, heedless, all complied,

All save Eurylochus, who fear'd a snare.

She, introducing them, conducted each

To a bright throne, then gave them Pramnian wine,

With grated cheese, pure meal, and honey new,

290

But medicated with her poisonous drugs

Their food, that in oblivion they might lose

The wish of home. She gave them, and they drank,—

When smiting each with her enchanting wand,

She shut them in her sties. In head, in voice,

295

In body, and in bristles they became

All swine, yet intellected as before,

And at her hand were dieted alone

With acorns, chestnuts, and the cornel-fruit,

Food grateful ever to the grovelling swine.

300

Back flew Eurylochus toward the ship,

To tell the woful tale ; struggling to speak
 Yet speechless, there he stood, his heart transfixt
 With anguish, and his eyes deluged with tears.
 Me boding terrors occupied. At length,
 When, gazing on him, all had oft inquired,
 He thus rehearsed to us the dreadful change.

305

Renown'd Ulysses ! as thou badest, we went
 Through yonder oaks ; there, bosom'd in a vale,
 But built conspicuous on a swelling knoll
 With polish'd rock, we found a stately dome.
 Within, some Goddess or some woman wove
 An ample web, carolling sweet the while.
 They call'd aloud ; she, issuing at the voice,
 Unfolded, soon, her splendid portals wide,
 And bade them in. Heedless they enter'd, all,
 But I remain'd, suspicious of a snare.
 Ere long the whole band vanish'd, none I saw
 Thenceforth, though, seated there, long time I watch'd.

310

He ended ; I my studded faulchion huge
 Athwart my shoulder cast, and seized my bow,
 Then bade him lead me thither by the way
 Himself had gone ; but with both hands my knees
 He clasp'd, and in wing'd accents sad exclaim'd.

315

My King ! ah lead me not unwilling back,
 But leave me here ; for confident I judge
 That neither thou wilt bring another thence,
 Nor come thyself again. Haste—fly we swift
 With these, for we, at least, may yet escape.

325

So he, to whom this answer I return'd.
 Eurylochus ! abiding here, eat thou
 And drink thy fill beside the sable bark ;
 I go ; necessity forbids my stay.

330

So saying, I left the galley and the shore.
 But ere that awful vale entering, I reach'd
 The palace of the sorceress, a God
 Met me, the bearer of the golden wand,
 Hermes. He seem'd a stripling in his prime,
 His cheeks clothed only with their earliest down,
 For youth is then most graceful ; fast he lock'd
 His hand in mine, and thus, familiar, spake.

335

Unhappy ! whither, wandering o'er the hills,

340

Stranger to all this region, and alone,
Goest thou? Thy people—they within the walls
Are shut of Circe, where as swine close-pent
She keeps them. Comest thou to set them free? 345

I tell thee, never wilt thou thence return
Thyself, but wilt be prison'd with the rest.
Yet hearken—I will disappoint her wiles,
And will preserve thee. Take this precious drug; 350

Possessing this, enter the Goddess' house
Boldly, for it shall save thy life from harm.
Lo! I reveal to thee the cruel arts
Of Circe; learn them. She will mix for thee 355

A potion, and will also drug thy food
With noxious herbs; but she shall not prevail
By all her power to change thee; for the force
Superior of this noble plant, my gift,
Shall baffle her. Hear still what I advise.
When she shall smite thee with her slender rod, 360

With faulchion drawn and with death-threatening looks
Rush on her; she will bid thee to her bed
Affrighted; then beware. Decline not thou
Her love, that she may both release thy friends,
And may with kindness entertain thyself.
But force her swear the dreaded oath of Heaven 365

That she will other mischief none devise
Against thee, lest she strip thee of thy might,
And quenching all thy virtue, make thee vile.
So spake the Argicide, and from the earth
That plant extracting, placed it in my hand,
Then taught me all its powers. Black was the root,
Milk-white the blossom; Moly is its name
In heaven; not easily by mortal man
Dug forth, but all is easy to the Gods. 370

Then Hermes through the island-woods repair'd
To heaven, and I to Circe's dread abode,
In gloomy musings busied as I went.
Within the vestibule arrived, where dwelt
The beauteous Goddess, staying there my steps
I call'd aloud; she heard me, and at once
Issuing, threw her splendid portals wide,
And bade me in. I follow'd, heart-distress'd. 380

Leading me by the hand to a bright throne
 With ardent studs embellish'd, and beneath
 Foot-stool'd magnificent, she made me sit. 385
 Then mingling for me in a golden cup
 My beverage, she infused a drug, intent
 On mischief; but when I had drunk the draught
 Unchanged, she smote me with her wand, and said. 390

Hence—seek the sty. There wallow with thy friends.
 She spake; I drawing from beside my thigh
 My faulchion keen, with death-denouncing looks
 Rush'd on her; she with a shrill scream of fear
 Ran under my raised arm, seized fast my knees, 395
 And in wing'd accents plaintive thus began.

Who? whence? thy city and thy birth declare.
 Amazed I see thee with that potion drench'd,
 Yet unenchanted; never man before
 Once pass'd it through his lips, and lived the same; 400
 But in thy breast a mind inhabits, proof
 Against all charms. Come then—I know thee well.
 Thou art Ulysses artifice-renown'd,
 Of whose arrival here in his return
 From Ilium, Hermes of the golden wand 405
 Was ever wont to tell me. Sheath again
 Thy sword, and let us on my bed reclined,
 Mutual embrace, that we may trust thenceforth
 Each other, without jealousy or fear.

The Goddess spake, to whom I thus replied. 410
 O Circe! canst thou bid me meek become
 And gentle, who beneath thy roof detain'st
 My fellow-voyagers transform'd to swine?
 And fearing my escape, invitest thou me
 Into thy bed, with fraudulent pretext
 Of love, that there enfeebling by thy arts 415
 My noble spirit, thou may'st make me vile?
 No—trust me—never will I share thy bed
 Till first, oh Goddess, thou consent to swear
 That dread all-binding oath, that other harm
 Against myself thou wilt imagine none. 420

I spake. She swearing as I bade, renounced
 All evil purpose, and (her solemn oath
 Concluded,) I ascended next her bed

Magnificent. Meantime, four graceful nymphs Attended on the service of the house, Her menials, from the fountains sprung and groves, And from the sacred streams that seek the sea.	425
Of these, one cast fine linen on the thrones, Which, next, with purple arras rich she spread ;	430
Another placed before the gorgeous seats Bright tables, and set on baskets of gold.	
The third, an argent beaker filled with wine Delicious, which in golden cups she served ;	435
The fourth brought water, which she warm'd within An ample vase, and when the simmering flood	
Sang in the tripod, led me to a bath, And laved me with the pleasant stream profuse	
Pour'd o'er my neck and body, till my limbs, Refresh'd, all sense of lassitude resign'd.	440
When she had bathed me, and with limpid oil Anointed me, and clothed me in a vest	
And mantle, next she led me to a throne Of royal state, with silver studs emboss'd,	
And footstool'd soft beneath ; then came a nymph	445
With golden ewer charged and silver bowl,	
Who pour'd pure water on my hands, and placed	
The polish'd board before me, which with food	
Various, selected from her present stores,	
The cateress spread, then, courteous, bade me eat.	450
But me it pleased not ; with far other thoughts	
My spirit teem'd, on vengeance more intent.	
Soon, then, as Circe mark'd me on my seat Fast-rooted, sullen, nor with outstretch'd hands	
Deigning to touch the banquet, she approach'd,	455
And in wing'd accents suasive thus began.	
Why sits Ulysses like the Dumb, dark thoughts His only food ? loathes he the touch of meat,	
And taste of wine ? Thou fear'st, as I perceive,	
Some other snare, but idle is that fear,	
For I have sworn the inviolable oath.	460
She ceased, to whom this answer I return'd.	
How can I eat ? what virtuous man and just,	
O Circe ! could endure the taste of wine	
Or food, till he should see his prison'd friends	465

Once more at liberty? If then thy wish
That I should eat and drink be true, produce
My captive people; let us meet again.

So I; then Circe, bearing in her hand
Her potent rod, went forth, and opening wide
The door, drove out my people from the sty,
In bulk resembling brawns of the ninth year.
They stood before me; she through all the herd
Proceeding, with an unctuous antidote

470

Anointed each, and at the wholesome touch
All shed the swinish bristles by the drug,
Dread Circe's former magic gift, produced.
Restored at once to manhood, they appear'd
More vigorous far, and sightlier than before.
They knew me, and with grasp affectionate
Hung on my hand. Tears follow'd, but of joy,
And with loud cries the vaulted palace rang.
Even the awful Goddess felt, herself,
Compassion, and, approaching me, began.

475

Læertes' noble son, for wiles renown'd!
Hence to the shore, and to thy gallant bark;
First, hale her safe aground, then, hiding all
Your arms and treasures in the caverns, come
Thyself again, and hither lead thy friends.

480

So spake the Goddess, and my generous mind
Persuaded; thence repairing to the beach,
I sought my ship; arrived, I found my crew
Lamenting miserably, and their cheeks
With tears bedewing ceaseless at her side.

485

As when the calves within some village rear'd
Behold, at eve, the herd returning home
From fruitful meads where they have grazed their fill,
No longer in the stalls contain'd, they rush
With many a frisk abroad, and, blaring oft,
With one consent all dance their dams around;
So they, at sight of me, dissolved in tears
Of rapturous joy, and each his spirit felt
With like affections warm'd as he had reach'd
Just then his country, and his city seen,
Fair Ithaca, where he was born and rear'd.
Then in wing'd accents tender thus they spake.

490

495

500

505

Noble Ulysses ! thy appearance fills
 Our soul with transports, such as we should feel
 Arrived in safety on our native shore.
 Speak—say how perish'd our unhappy friends ?

510

So they ; to whom this answer mild I gave.
 Hale we our vessel first ashore, and hide
 In caverns all our treasures and our arms,
 Then, hasting hence, follow me, and ere long
 Ye shall behold your friends, beneath the roof
 Of Circe banqueting and drinking wine
 Abundant, for no dearth attends them there.

515

So I ; whom all with readiness obey'd,
 All save Eurylochus ; he sought alone
 To stay the rest, and, eager, interposed.

520

Ah, whither tend we, miserable men ?
 Why covet ye this evil, to go down
 To Circe's palace ? she will change us all
 To lions, wolves, or swine, that we may guard
 Her palace, by necessity constrain'd.
 So some were prisoners of the Cyclops erst,
 When, led by rash Ulysses, our lost friends
 Intruded needlessly into his cave,
 And perish'd by the folly of their Chief.

525

He spake, whom hearing, occupied I stood
 In self-debate, whether, my faulchion keen
 Forth-drawing from beside my sturdy thigh,
 To tumble his lopp'd head into the dust,
 Although he were my kinsman in the bonds
 Of close affinity ; but all my friends,
 As with one voice, thus gently interposed.

530

Noble Ulysses ! we will leave him here
 Our vessel's guard, if such be thy command,
 But us lead thou to Circe's dread abode.

535

So saying, they left the galley, and set forth
 Climbing the coast ; nor would Eurylochus
 Beside the hollow bark remain, but join'd
 His comrades, by my dreadful menace awed.
 Meantime the Goddess, busily employ'd,
 Bathed and refresh'd my friends with limpid oil,
 And clothed them. We, arriving, found them all
 Banqueting in the palace ; there they met ;

540

545

These ask'd and those rehearsed the wondrous tale,
And the recital made, all wept aloud
Till the wide dome resounded. Then approach'd
The graceful Goddess, and addressed me thus.

Laertes' noble son, for wiles renown'd !
Provoke ye not each other, now, to tears.
I am not ignorant, myself, how dread
Have been your woes, both on the fishy Deep, 555
And on the land by force of hostile powers.
But come—Eat now, and drink ye wine, that so
Your freshen'd spirit may revive, and ye
Courageous grow again, as when ye left
The rugged shores of Ithaca, your home. 560
For now, through recollection, day by day,
Of all your pains and toils, ye are become
Spiritless, strengthless, and the taste forget
Of pleasure, such have been your numerous woes.

She spake, whose invitation kind prevail'd,
And won us to her will. There then we dwelt
The year complete, fed with delicious fare
Day after day, and quaffing generous wine.
But when (the year fulfill'd) the circling hours
Their course resumed, and the successive months 570
With all their tedious days were spent, my friends,
Summoning me abroad, thus greeted me.

Sir ! recollect thy country, if indeed
The fates ordain thee to revisit safe
That country, and thy own glorious abode. 575

So they ; whose admonition I received
Well-pleased. Then, all the day, regaled we sat
At Circe's board with savoury viands rare,
And quaffing richest wine ; but when, the sun
Declining, darkness overshadow'd all, 580
Then, each within the dusky palace took
Custom'd repose, and to the Goddess' bed
Magnificent ascending, there I urged
My earnest suit, which gracious she received,
And in wing'd accents earnest thus I spake. 585

O Circe ! let us prove thy promise true ;
Dismiss us hence. My own desires, at length,
Tend homeward vehement, and the desires

No less of all my friends, who with complaints
Unheard by thee, wear my sad heart away.

590

So I ; to whom the Goddess in return.

Laertes' noble son, Ulysses famed
For deepest wisdom ! dwell not longer here,
Thou and thy followers, in my abode
Reluctant. But your next must be a course
Far different ; hence departing, ye must seek
The dreary house of Ades and of dread
Persephone, there to consult the Seer
Theban Tiresias, prophet blind, but blest
With faculties which death itself hath spared.
To him alone, of all the dead, Hell's Queen
Gives still to prophecy, while others flit
Mere forms, the shadows of what once they were.

595

She spake, and by her words dash'd from my soul
All courage ; weeping on the bed I sat,
Reckless of life and of the light of day.
But when, with tears and rolling to and fro
Satiate, I felt relief, thus I replied.

600

O Circe ! with what guide shall I perform
This voyage, unperform'd by living man ?

610

I spake, to whom the Goddess quick replied.
Brave Laertiades ! let not the fear
To want a guide distress thee. Once on board,
Your mast erected, and your canvas white
Unfurl'd, sit thou ; the breathing North shall waft
Thy vessel on. But when ye shall have cross'd
The broad expanse of Ocean, and shall reach
The oozy shore, where grow the poplar groves
And fruitless willows wan of Proserpine,
Push thither through the gulfy Deep thy bark,
And, landing, haste to Pluto's murky abode.

615

There, into Acheron runs not alone
Dread Pyriphlegethon, but Cocytus loud,
From Styx derived ; there also stands a rock,
At whose broad base the roaring rivers meet.
There, thrusting, as I bid, thy bark ashore,
O Hero ! scoop the soil, opening a trench
Ell-broad on every side ; then pour around
Libation consecrate to all the dead,

620

625

First, milk with honey mixt, then luscious wine, 630
 Then water, sprinkling, last, meal over all.

Next supplicate the unsubstantial forms,
 Fervently of the dead, vowed to slay,
 (Return'd to Ithaca) in thy own house,
 An heifer barren yet, fairest and best 635
 Of all thy herds, and to enrich the pile
 With delicacies such as please the shades ;
 But, in peculiar, to Tiresias vow
 A sable-ram, noblest of all thy flocks.

When thus thou hast propitiated with prayer 640
 All the illustrious nations of the dead,
 Next thou shalt sacrifice to them a ram
 And sable ewe, turning the face of each
 Right toward Erebus, and look thyself,
 Meantime, askance toward the river's course. 645
 Souls numerous, soon, of the departed dead
 Will thither flock ; then strenuous urge thy friends,
 Flaying the victims which thy ruthless steel
 Hath slain, to burn them, and to soothe by prayer
 Illustrious Pluto and dread Proserpine. 650
 While thus is done, thou seated at the foss,
 Faulchion in hand, chase thence the airy forms
 Afar, nor suffer them to approach the blood,
 Till with Tiresias thou have first conferr'd.

Then, glorious Chief ! the Prophet shall himself 655
 Appear, who will instruct thee, and thy course
 Delineate, measuring from place to place
 Thy whole return athwart the fishy flood.

While thus she spake, the golden dawn arose,
 When, putting on me my attire, the nymph 660
 Next cloth'd herself, and girding to her waist
 With an embroider'd zone her snowy robe
 Graceful, redundant, veil'd her beauteous head.
 Then, ranging the wide palace, I aroused
 My followers, standing at the side of each— 665
 Up ! sleep no longer ! let us quick depart,
 For thus the Goddess hath, herself, advised.

So I, whose early summons my brave friends
 With readiness obey'd. Yet even thence
 I brought not all my crew. There was a youth, 670

Youngest of all my train, Elpenor ; one
 Not much in estimation for desert
 In arms, nor prompt in understanding more,
 Who, overcharged with wine, and covetous
 Of cooler air, high on the palace-roof 675
 Of Circe slept, apart from all the rest.
 Awaken'd by the clamour of his friends
 Newly arisen, he also sprang to rise,
 And in his haste, forgetful where to find
 The deep-descending stairs, plunged through the roof. 680
 With neck-bone broken from the vertebræ
 Outstretch'd he lay ; his spirit sought the shades.

Then, thus to my assembling friends I spake.
 Ye think, I doubt not, of an homeward course,
 But Circe points me to the drear abode 685
 Of Proserpine and Pluto, to consult
 The spirit of Tiresias, Theban seer.

I ended, and the hearts of all alike
 Felt consternation ; on the earth they sat
 Disconsolate, and plucking each his hair,
 Yet profit none of all their sorrow found. 690

But while we sought my galley on the beach,
 With tepid tears bedewing, as we went,
 Our cheeks, meantime the Goddess to the shore
 Descending, bound within the bark a ram
 And sable ewe, passing us unperceived.
 For who hath eyes that can discern a God
 Going or coming, if he shun the view ? 695

BOOK XI.

A R G U M E N T.

Ulysses relates to Alcinous his voyage to the infernal regions, his conference there with the prophet Tiresias concerning his return to Ithaca, and gives him an account of the heroes, heroines, and others whom he saw there.

ARRIVING on the shore, and launching, first,
 Our bark into the sacred Deep, we set
 Our mast and sails, and stow'd secure on board
 The ram and ewe, then, weeping, and with hearts
 Sad and disconsolate, embark'd ourselves. 5
 And now, melodious Circe, nymph divine,
 Sent after us a canvas-stretching breeze,
 Pleasant companion of our course, and we
 (The decks and benches clear'd) untoiling sat,
 While managed gales sped swift the bark along. 10
 All day, with sails distended, o'er the Deep
 She flew, and when the sun at length declined,
 And twilight dim had shadow'd all the ways,
 Approach'd the bourn of Ocean's vast profound.
 The city, there, of the Cimmerians stands 15
 With clouds and darkness veil'd, on whom the sun
 Deigns not to look with his beam-darting eye,
 Or when he climbs the starry arch, or when
 Earthward he slopes again his westerling¹ wheels,
 But sad night canopies the woful race. 20
 We haled the bark aground, and landing there
 The ram and sable ewe, journey'd beside
 The Deep, till we arrived where Circe bade.
 Here Perimides' son Eurylochus
 Held fast the destined sacrifice, while I 25
 Scoop'd with my sword the soil, opening a trench
 Ell-broad on every side, then pour'd around

¹ Milton.

Libation consecrate to all the dead,
 First, milk with honey mixt, then luscious wine,
 Then water, sprinkling, last, meal over all. 30

This done, adoring the unreal forms
 And shadows of the dead, I vow'd to slay,
 (Return'd to Ithaca) in my own abode,
 An heifer barren yet, fairest and best
 Of all my herds, and to enrich the pile 35
 With delicacies, such as please the shades.

But in peculiar, to the Theban seer
 I vow'd a sable ram, largest and best
 Of all my flocks. When thus I had implored,
 With vows and prayer, the nations of the dead, 40
 Piercing the victims next, I turn'd them both
 To bleed into the trench ; then swarming came
 From Erebus the shades of the deceased,
 Brides, youths unwedded, seniors long with woe
 Oppress'd, and tender girls yet new to grief. 45

Came also many a warrior by the spear
 In battle pierced, with armour gore-distain'd,
 And all the multitude around the foss
 Stalk'd shrieking dreadful ; me pale horror seized.
 I next, importunate, my people urged, 50

Flaying the victims which myself had slain,
 To burn them, and to supplicate in prayer
 Illustrious Pluto and dread Proserpine.
 Then down I sat, and with drawn faulchion chased
 The ghosts, nor suffer'd them to approach the blood, 55

Till with Tiresias I should first confer.

The spirit, first, of my companion came,
 Elpenor ; for no burial honours yet
 Had he received, but we had left his corse
 In Circe's palace, tombless, undeplored,
 Ourselves by pressure urged of other cares. 60

Touch'd with compassion seeing him, I wept,
 And in wing'd accents brief him thus bespake.

Elpenor ! how camest thou into the realms
 Of darkness ? Hast thou, though on foot, so far
 Outstripp'd my speed, who in my bark arrived ?

So I, to whom with tears he thus replied.
 Laertes' noble son, for wiles renown'd !

Fool'd by some daëmon and the intemperate bowl,
I perish'd in the house of Circe ; there
The deep-descending steps heedless I miss'd,
And fell precipitated from the roof.

With neck-bone broken from the vertebræ
Outstretch'd I lay ; my spirit sought the shades.

But now, by those whom thou hast left at home,
By thy Penelope, and by thy sire,
The gentle nourisher of thy infant growth,
And by thy only son Telemachus,

I make my suit to thee. For sure, I know,
That from the house of Pluto safe return'd,
Thou shalt ere long thy gallant vessel moor
At the Ææan isle. Ah ! there arrived

Remember me. Leave me not undeplored
Nor uninhumed, lest, for my sake, the Gods
In vengeance visit thee ; but with my arms
(What arms soe'er I left) burn me, and raise
A kind memorial of me on the coast,
Heap'd high with earth ; that an unhappy man
May yet enjoy an unforgotten name.

Thus do at my request, and on my hill
Funereal plant the oar with which I row'd,
While yet I lived a mariner of thine.

He spake, to whom thus answer I return'd.
Poor youth ! I will perform thy whole desire.

Thus we, there sitting, doleful converse held,
With outstretch'd faulchion, I guarding the blood,
And my companion's shadowy semblance sad
Meantime discoursing me on various themes.
The soul of my departed mother, next,

Of Anticleia came, daughter of brave
Autolycus ; whom when I sought the shores
Of Ilium, I had living left at home.

Seeing her, with compassion touch'd, I wept,
Yet even her, (although it pain'd my soul)
Forbad, relentless, to approach the blood,
Till with Tiresias I should first confer.
Then came the spirit of the Theban seer
Himself, his golden sceptre in his hand,
Who knew me, and, enquiring, thus began.

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Why, hapless Chief! leaving the cheerful day,
Arrivest thou to behold the dead and this
Unpleasant land ? but, from the trench awhile
Receding, turn thy faulchion keen away,
That I may drink the blood, and tell thee truth.

110

He spake ; I thence receding, deep infix'd
My sword bright-studded in the sheath again.
The noble prophet then, approaching, drank
The blood, and satisfied, address'd me thus.

115

Thou seek'st a pleasant voyage home again,
Renown'd Ulysses ! but a God will make
That voyage difficult ; for, as I judge,
Thou wilt not pass by Neptune unperceived,
Whose anger follows thee, for that thou hast
Deprived his son the Cyclops of his eye.

120

At length, however, after numerous woes
Endured, thou may'st attain thy native isle,
If thy own appetite thou wilt control
And theirs who follow thee, what time thy bark
Well-built, shall at Thrinacia's² shore arrive,
Escaped from perils of the gloomy Deep.

125

There shall ye find grazing the flocks and herds
Of the all-seeing and all-hearing Sun,
Which, if attentive to thy safe return,
Thou leave unharmed, though after numerous woes
Ye may at length arrive in Ithaca.

135

But if thou violate them, I denounce
Destruction on thy ship and all thy band,
And though thyself escape, late shalt thou reach
Thy home and ³hard-bested, in a strange bark,
All thy companions lost ; trouble beside
Awaits thee there, for thou shalt find within
Proud suitors of thy noble wife, who waste
Thy substance, and with promised spousal gifts
Ceaseless solicit her to wed ; yet well
Shalt thou avenge all their injurious deeds.
That once perform'd, and every suitor slain

140

145

² The shore of Sicily, commonly called Trinacria, but *euphonice* by Homer, Thrinacia.

³ The expression is used by Milton, and signifies—Beset with many difficulties.

Either by stratagem, or face to face
 In thy own palace, bearing, as thou goest,
 A shapely oar, journey till thou hast found
 A people who the sea know not, nor eat
 Food salted ; they trim galley crimson-prow'd
 Have ne'er beheld, nor yet smooth-shaven oar,
 With which the vessel wing'd scuds o'er the waves.
 Well thou shalt know them ; this shall be the sign
 When thou shalt meet a traveller, who shall name
 The oar on thy broad shoulder borne, a van,⁴ 150
 There, deep infixing it within the soil,
 Worship the King of Ocean with a bull,
 A ram, and a lascivious boar, then seek
 Thy home again, and sacrifice at home
 An hecatomb to the Immortal Gods,
 Adoring each duly, and in his course. 160
 So shalt thou die in peace a gentle death,
 Remote from Ocean ; it shall find thee late,
 In soft serenity of age, the Chief
 Of a blest people.—I have told thee truth. 165

He spake, to whom I answer thus return'd.
 Tiresias ! thou, I doubt not, hast reveal'd
 The ordinance of heaven. But tell me, Seer !
 And truly. I behold my mother's shade ; 170
 Silent she sits beside the blood, nor word
 Nor even look vouchsafes to her own son.
 How shall she learn, prophet ! that I am hers ?

So I, to whom Tiresias quick replied.
 The course is easy. Learn it, taught by me. 175
 What shade soe'er, by leave from thee obtain'd,
 Shall taste the blood, that shade will tell thee truth ;
 The rest, prohibited, will all retire.

When thus the spirit of the royal Seer
 Had his prophetic mind reveal'd, again 180
 He entered Pluto's gates ; but I unmoved
 Still waited till my mother's shade approach'd ;
 She drank the blood, then knew me, and in words
 Wing'd with affection, plaintive, thus began.

My son ! how hast thou enter'd, still alive, 185

⁴ Mistaking the oar for a corn-van. A sure indication of his ignorance of maritime concerns.

This darksome region ? Difficult it is
 For living man to view the realms of death.
 Broad rivers roll, and awful floods between,
 But chief, the Ocean, which to pass on foot,
 Or without ship, impossible is found. 190
 Hast thou, long-wandering in thy voyage home
 From Ilium, with thy ship and crew arrived,
 Ithaca and thy consort yet unseen ?

She spake, to whom this answer I return'd.
 My mother ! me necessity constrain'd
 To Pluto's dwelling, anxious to consult
 Theban Tiresias ; for I have not yet
 Approach'd Achaia, nor have touch'd the shore
 Of Ithaca, but suffering ceaseless woe
 Have roam'd, since first in Agamemnon's train 200
 I went to combat with the sons of Troy.
 But speak, my mother, and the truth alone ;
 What stroke of fate slew *thee* ? Fell'st thou a prey
 To some slow malady ? or by the shafts
 Of gentle Dian suddenly subdued ? 205
 Speak to me also of my ancient Sire,
 And of Telemachus, whom I left at home ;
 Possess I still unalienate and safe
 My property, or hath some happier Chief
 Admittance free into my fortunes gain'd, 210
 No hope subsisting more of my return ?
 The mind and purpose of my wedded wife
 Declare thou also. Dwells she with our son
 Faithful to my domestic interests,
 Or is she wedded to some Chief of Greece ? 215

I ceased, when thus the venerable shade.
 Not so ; she faithful still and patient dwells
 Thy roof beneath ; but all her days and nights
 Devoting sad to anguish and to tears.
 Thy fortunes still are thine ; Telemachus 220
 Cultivates, undisturb'd, thy land, and sits
 At many a noble banquet, such as well
 Beseems the splendour of his princely state,
 For all invite him. At his farm retired
 Thy father dwells, nor to the city comes
 For aught ; nor bed, nor furniture of bed,

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Furr'd cloaks or splendid arras he enjoys,
But with his servile hinds all winter sleeps
In ashes and in dust at the hearth-side,
Coarsely attired ; again, when summer comes, 230
Or genial autumn, on the fallen leaves
In any nook, not curious where, he finds
An humble couch among his fruitful vines.
There, stretch'd forlorn, nourishing grief, he weeps
Thy lot, enfeebled now by numerous years. 235
So perish'd I ; such fate I also found ;
Me, neither the right-aiming archeress struck,
Diana, with her gentle shafts, nor me
Distemper slew, my limbs by slow degrees,
But sure, bereaving of their little life ; 240
But long regret, tender solicitude,
And recollection of thy kindness past,
These, my Ulysses ! fatal proved to me.

She said ; I ardent wish'd to clasp the shade
Of my departed mother ; thrice I sprang 245
Toward her, by desire impetuous urged,
And thrice she flitted from between my arms
Light as a passing shadow or a dream.
Then, pierced by keener grief, in accents wing'd
With filial earnestness I thus replied. 250

My mother, why clud'st thou my attempt
To clasp thee, that even here, in Pluto's realm,
We might to full satiety indulge
Our grief enfolded in each other's arms ?
Hath Proserpine, alas ! only dispatch'd 255
A shadow to me, to augment my woe ?

Then, instant, thus the venerable form.
Ah, son ! thou most afflicted of mankind !
On thee, Jove's daughter, Proserpine, obtrudes
No airy semblance vain ; but such the state 260
And nature is of mortals once deceased.
For they nor muscle have, nor flesh, nor bone ;
All those (the spirit from the body once
Divorced) the violence of fire consumes,
And, like a dream, the soul flies swift away. 265
But haste thou back to light, and taught thyself
These sacred truths, hereafter teach thy spouse.

Thus mutual we conferr'd. Then, thither came,
 Encouraged forth by royal Proserpine,
 Shades female numerous, all who consorts, erst,
 Or daughters were of mighty Chiefs renown'd.
 About the sable blood frequent they swarm'd.
 But I considering sat, how I might each
 Interrogate, and thus resolved. My sword
 Forth drawing from beside my sturdy thigh,
 Firm I prohibited the ghosts to drink
 The blood together ; they successive came ;
 Each told her own distress ; I question'd all.

There, first, the high-born Tyro I beheld ;
 She claim'd Salmoneus as her sire, and wife
 Was once of Cretheus, son of Æolus.
 Enamour'd of Enipeus, stream divine,
 Loveliest of all that water earth, beside
 His limpid current she was wont to stray,
 When Ocean's God (Enipeus' form assumed)
 Within the eddy-whirling river's mouth
 Embraced her ; there, while the o'er-arching flood,
 Uplifted mountainous, conceal'd the God
 And his fair human bride, her virgin zone
 He loosed, and o'er her eyes sweet sleep diffused.
 His amorous purpose satisfied, he grasp'd
 Her hand, affectionate, and thus he said.

Rejoice in this my love, and when the year
 Shall tend to consummation of its course,
 Thou shalt produce illustrious twins, for love
 Immortal never is unfruitful love.
 Rear them with all a mother's care ; meantime,
 Hence to thy home. Be silent. Name it not.
 For I am Neptune, Shaker of the shores.

So saying, he plunged into the billowy Deep.
 She, pregnant grown, Pelias and Neleus bore,
 Both valiant ministers of mighty Jove.
 In wide-spread Iæolchus Pelias dwelt,
 Of numerous flocks possess'd ; but his abode
 Amid the sands of Pylus Neleus chose.
 To Cretheus wedded next, the lovely nymph
 Yet other sons, Æson and Pheres bore,
 And Amythaon of equestrian fame.

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I, next, the daughter of Asopus saw,
Antiope ; she glорied to have known
The embrace of Jove himself, to whom she brought
A double progeny, Amphion named
And Zethus ; they the seven-gated Thebes
Founded and girded with strong towers, because,
Though puissant Heroes both, in spacious Thebes,
Unfenced by towers, they could not dwell secure. 315

Alcmena, next, wife of Amphitryon,
I saw ; she in the arms of sovereign Jove
The lion-hearted Hercules conceived,
And, after, bore to Creon brave in fight
His daughter Megara, by the noble son
Unconquer'd of Amphitryon espoused. 320

The beauteous Epicaste⁵ saw I then,
Mother of Oedipus, who guilt incur'd
Prodigious, wedded unintentional
To her own son ; his father first he slew,
Then wedded her, which soon the Gods divulged.
He, under vengeance of offended heaven,
In pleasant Thebes dwelt miserable, King
Of the Cadmean race ; she to the gates
Of Ades brazen-barr'd despairing went,
Self-strangled by a cord fasten'd aloft
To her own palace-roof, and woes bequeath'd
(Such as the Fury sisters execute
Innumerable) to her guilty son. 335

There also saw I Chloris, loveliest fair,
Whom Neleus woo'd and won with spousal gifts
Inestimable, by her beauty charm'd.
She youngest daughter was of Iasus' son,
Amphion, in old time a sovereign prince
In Minueian Orchomenus,
And King of Pylus. Three illustrious sons
She bore to Neleus, Nestor, Chromius,
And Periclymenus the wide-renown'd,
And, last, produced a wonder of the earth,
Pero, by every neighbour prince around
In marriage sought ; but Neleus her on none
Deign'd to bestow, save only on the Chief 345

⁵ By the Tragedians called—Jocasta.

Who should from Phylace drive off the beeves
(Broad-fronted, and with jealous care secured)
Of valiant Iphicles. One undertook
That task alone, a prophet high in fame,
Melampus ; but the Fates fast bound him there
In rigorous bonds by rustic hands imposed.
At length (the year, with all its months and days
Concluded, and the new-born year begun)
Illiustrious Iphicles released the seer,
Grateful⁶ for all the oracles resolved,
Till then obscure. So stood the will of Jove.

350

Next, Leda, wife of Tyndarus, I saw,
Who bore to Tyndarus a noble pair,
Castor the bold, and Pollux cestus-famed.
They prisoners in the fertile womb of earth,
Though living, dwell, and even there from Jove
High privilege gain ; alternate they revive
And die, and dignity partake divine.

360

The consort of Aloëus, next, I view'd,
Iphimedea ; she the embrace profess'd
Of Neptune to have shared, to whom she bore
Two sons ; short-lived they were, but godlike both,
Otus and Ephialtes far-renown'd.

365

Orion sole except, all-bounteous Earth
Ne'er nourish'd forms for beauty or for size
To be admired as theirs ; in his ninth year
Each measured, broad, nine cubits, and the height
Was found nine ells of each. Against the Gods
Themselves they threaten'd war, and to excite
The din of battle in the realms above.

370

To the Olympian summit they essay'd
To heave up Ossa, and to Ossa's crown
Branch-waving Pelion ; so to climb the heavens.
Nor had they failed, maturer grown in might,
To accomplish that emprise, but them the son⁷
Of radiant-hair'd Latona and of Jove
Slew both, ere yet the down of blooming youth

375

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⁶ Iphicles had been informed by the Oracles, that he should have no children till instructed by a prophet how to obtain them ; a service which Melampus had the good fortune to render him.

⁷ Apollo.

Thick-sprung, their cheeks or chins had tufted o'er.

Phædra I also there, and Procris saw,
And Ariadne for her beauty praised,
Whose sire was all-wise Minos. Theseus her
From Crete toward the fruitful region bore
Of sacred Athens, but enjoy'd not there,
For, first, she perish'd by Diana's shafts
In Dia, Bacchus⁸ witnessing her crime.

390

Mæra and Clymene I saw beside,
And odious Eriphyle, who received
The price in gold of her own husband's life.

395

But all the wives of Heroes whom I saw,
And all their daughters, can I not relate ;
Night, first, would fail ; and even now the hour
Calls me to rest either on board my bark,
Or here ; meantime, I in yourselves confide,
And in the Gods to shape my conduct home.

400

He ceased ; the whole assembly silent sat,
Charm'd into ecstasy by his discourse
Throughout the twilight hall, till, at the last,
Areta ivory-arm'd them thus bespake.

405

Phæacians ! how appears he in your eyes
This stranger, graceful as he is in port,
In stature noble, and in mind discreet ?
My guest he is, but ye all share with me
That honour ; him dismiss not, therefore, hence
With haste, nor from such indigence withhold
Supplies gratuitous ; for ye are rich,
And by kind heaven with rare possessions blest.

410

The Hero, next, Echeneus spake, a Chief
Now ancient, eldest of Phæacia's sons.

415

Your prudent Queen, my friends, speaks not beside
Her proper scope, but as beseems her well.
Her voice obey ; yet the effect of all
Must on Alcinoüs himself depend.

420

To whom Alcinoüs, thus, the King, replied.
I ratify the word. So shall be done,
As surely as myself shall live supreme
O'er all Phæacia's maritime domain.

⁸ Bacchus accused her to Diana of having lain with Theseus in his temple, and the Goddess punished her with death.

Then let the guest, though anxious to depart,
Wait till the morrow, that I may complete
The whole donation. His safe conduct home
Shall be the general care, but mine in chief,
To whom dominion o'er the rest belongs.

425

Him answer'd, then, Ulysses ever-wise.
Alcinoüs ! Prince ! exalted high o'er all
Phœacia's sons ! should ye solicit, kind,
My stay throughout the year, preparing still
My conduct home, and with illustrious gifts
Enriching me the while, even that request
Should please me well ; the wealthier I return'd,
The happier my condition ; welcome more
And more respectable I should appear
In every eye, to Ithaca restored.

430

435

To whom Alcinoüs answer thus return'd.
Ulysses ! viewing thee, no fears we feel
Lest thou, at length, some false pretender prove,
Or subtle hypocrite, of whom no few
Disseminated o'er its face the earth
Sustains, adepts in fiction, and who frame
Fables, where fables could be least surmised.
Thy phrase well turn'd, and thy ingenuous mind
Proclaim *thee* different far, who hast in strains
Musical as a poet's voice, the woes
Rehearsed of all thy Grecians, and thy own.
But say, and tell me true. Beheld'st thou there
None of thy followers to the walls of Troy
Slain in that warfare ? Lo ! the night is long—
A night of utmost length ; nor yet the hour
Invites to sleep. Tell me thy wondrous deeds,
For I could watch till sacred dawn, couldst thou
So long endure to tell me of thy toils.

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Then thus Ulysses, ever-wise, replied.

Alcinoüs ! high exalted over all
Phœacia's sons ! the time suffices yet
For converse both and sleep, and if thou wish
To hear still more, I shall not spare to unfold
More pitiable woes than these, sustain'd
By my companions, in the end destroy'd ;
Who saved from perils of disastrous war

460

465

At Ilium, perish'd yet in their return,
Victims of a pernicious woman's⁹ crime.

Now, when chaste Proserpine had wide dispersed
Those female shades, the spirit sore distress'd
Of Agamemnon, Atreus' son, appear'd ;
Encircled by a throng, he came ; by all
Who with himself beneath \mathbb{E} gisthus' roof
Their fate fulfill'd, perishing by the sword.

He drank the blood, and knew me ; shrill he wail'd
And querulous ; tears trickling bathed his cheeks,
And with spread palms, through ardour of desire,
He sought to enfold me fast, but vigour none,
Or force, as erst, his agile limbs inform'd.
I, pity-moved, wept at the sight, and him,
In accents wing'd by friendship, thus address'd.

Ah, glorious son of Atreus, King of men !
What hand inflicted the all-numbing stroke
Of death on thee ? Say didst thou perish sunk
By howling tempests irresistible
Which Neptune raised, or on dry land by force
Of hostile multitudes, while cutting off
Beeves from the herd, or driving flocks away,
Or fighting for Achaia's daughters, shut
Within some city's bulwarks close besieged ?

I ceased, when Agamemnon thus replied.
Ulysses, noble Chief, Laertes' son
For wisdom famed ! I neither perish'd sunk
By howling tempests irresistible
Which Neptune raised, nor on dry land received
From hostile multitudes the fatal blow,
But me \mathbb{E} gisthus slew ; my woful death
Confederate with my own pernicious wife
He plotted, with a show of love sincere
Bidding me to his board, where as the ox
Is slaughter'd at his crib, he slaughter'd me.

Such was my dreadful death ; carnage ensued
Continual of my friends slain all around,
Numerous as boars bright-tusk'd at nuptial feast,
Or feast convivial of some wealthy Chief.
Thou hast already witness'd many a field

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⁹ Probably meaning Helen.

With warriors overspread, slain one by one,
But that dire scene had most thy pity moved,
For we, with brimming beakers at our side,
And underneath full tables, bleeding lay.

Blood floated all the pavement. Then the cries
Of Priam's daughter sounded in my ears
Most pitiable of all, Cassandra's cries,
Whom Clytemnestra close beside me slew.

Expiring as I lay, I yet essay'd
To grasp my faulchion, but the traitoress quick
Withdrew herself, nor would vouchsafe to close
My languid eyes, or prop my drooping chin
Even in the moment when I sought the shades.
So that the thing breathes not, ruthless and fell
As woman once resolved on such a deed
Detestable, as my base wife contrived,
The murder of the husband of her youth.
I thought to have return'd welcome to all,
To my own children and domestic train ;
But she, past measure profligate, hath pour'd
Shame on herself, on women yet unborn,
And even on the virtuous of her sex.

He ceased, to whom, thus, answer I return'd.
Gods ! how severely hath the Thunderer plagued
The house of Atreus, even from the first,
By female counsels ! we for Helen's sake
Have numerous died, and Clytemnestra framed,
While thou wast far remote, this snare for thee !

So I, to whom Atrides thus replied.
Thou, therefore, be not pliant overmuch
To woman ; trust her not with all thy mind,
But half disclose to her, and half conceal.
Yet, from thy consort's hand no bloody death,
My friend, hast thou to fear ; for passing wise
Icarus' daughter is, far other thoughts,
Intelligent, and other plans, to frame.
Her, going to the wars we left a bride
New-wedded, and the boy hung at her breast,
Who, man himself, consorts ere now with men
A prosperous youth ; his father, safe restored
To his own Ithaca, shall see him soon,

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And *he* shall clasp his father in his arms
 As nature bids ; but me, my cruel one
 Indulged not with the dear delight to gaze
 On my Orestes, for she slew me first.
 But listen¹⁰ ; treasure what I now impart.
 Steer secret to thy native isle ; avoid
 Notice ; for woman merits trust no more.
 Now tell me truth. Hear ye in whose abode
 My son resides ? dwells he in Pylus, say,
 Or in Orchomenos, or else beneath
 My brother's roof in Sparta's wide domain ?
 For my Orestes is not yet a shade.

So he, to whom I answer thus return'd.
 Atrides, ask not me. Whether he live,
 Or have already died, I nothing know ;
 Mere words are vanity, and better spared.

Thus we discoursing mutual stood, and tears
 Shedding disconsolate. The shade, meantime,
 Came of Achilles, Peleus' mighty son ;
 Patroclus also, and Antilochus
 Appear'd, with Ajax, for proportion just
 And stature tall, (Pelides sole except)
 Distinguish'd above all Achaia's sons.

The soul of swift *Æ*acides at once
 Knew me, and in wing'd accents thus began.

Brave Laertiades, for wiles renown'd !
 What mightier enterprize than all the past
 Hath made thee here a guest ? rash as thou art !
 How hast thou dared to penetrate the gloom
 Of Ades, dwelling of the shadowy dead,
 Semblances only of what once they were ?

He spake, to whom I, answering, thus replied.
 O Peleus' son ! Achilles ! bravest far
 Of all Achaia's race ! I here arrived
 Seeking Tiresias, from his lips to learn,
 Perchance, how I might safe regain the coast
 Of craggy Ithaca ; for tempest-toss'd

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¹⁰ This is, surely, one of the most natural strokes to be found in any poet. Convinc'd, for a moment, by the virtues of Penelope, he mentions her with respect ; but recollecting himself suddenly, involves even her in his general ill opinion of the sex, begotten in him by the crimes of Clytemnestra.

Perpetual, I have neither yet approach'd
 Achaia's shore, or landed on my own.
 But as for thee, Achilles! never man
 Hath known felicity like thine, or shall,
 Whom living we all honour'd as a God,
 And who maintain'st, here resident, supreme
 Control among the dead ; indulge not then,
 Achilles, causeless grief that thou hast died.

585

I ceased, and answer thus instant received.
 Renown'd Ulysses ! think not death a theme
 Of consolation ; I had rather live
 The servile hind for hire, and eat the bread
 Of some man scantily himself sustain'd,
 Than sovereign empire hold o'er all the shades.
 But come—speak to me of my noble boy ;
 Proceeds he, as he promised, brave in arms,
 Or shuns he war ? Say also hast thou heard
 Of royal Peleus ? shares he still respect
 Among his numerous Myrmidons, or scorn
 In Hellas and in Phthia, for that age
 Predominates in his enfeebled limbs ?
 For help is none in me ; the glorious sun
 No longer sees me such, as when in aid
 Of the Achaians I o'erspread the field
 Of spacious Troy with all their bravest slain.

595

Oh¹¹ might I, vigorous as then, repair
 For one short moment to my father's house,
 They all should tremble ; I would show an arm,
 Such as should daunt the fiercest who presumes
 To injure *him*, or to despise his age.

600

Achilles spake, to whom I thus replied.
 Of noble Peleus have I nothing heard ;
 But I will tell thee, as thou biddest, the truth
 Unfeign'd of Neoptolemus thy son ;
 For him, myself, on board my hollow bark
 From Scyros to Achaia's host convey'd.
 Oft as in council under Ilium's walls

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¹¹ Another most beautiful stroke of nature. Ere yet Ulysses has had opportunity to answer, the very thought that Peleus may possibly be insulted, fires him, and he takes the whole for granted. Thus is the impetuous character of Achilles sustained to the last moment.

We met, he ever foremost was in speech,
Nor spake erroneous ; Nestor and myself
Except, no Grecian could with him compare.
Oft, too, as we with battle hemm'd around
Troy's bulwarks from among the mingled crowd 625
Thy son sprang foremost into martial act,
Inferior in heroic worth to none.
Beneath him numerous fell the sons of Troy
In dreadful fight, nor have I power to name
Distinctly all, who by his glorious arm, 630
Exerted in the cause of Greece, expired.
Yet will I name Eurypylus, the son
Of Telephus, an Hero whom his sword
Of life bereaved, and all around him strew'd
The plain with his Cetean warriors, won 635
To Ilium's side by bribes¹² to women given.
Save noble Memnon only, I beheld
No Chief at Ilium beautiful as he.
Again, when we within the horse of wood
Framed by Epeüs sat, an ambush chosen 640
Of all the bravest Greeks, and I in trust
Was placed to open or to keep fast-closed
The hollow fraud ; then every Chieftain there
And Senator of Greece wiped from his cheeks
The tears, and tremors felt in every limb ; 645
But never saw I changed to terror's hue
His ruddy cheeks, no tears wiped he away,
But oft he press'd me to go forth, his suit
With prayers enforcing, griping hard his hilt
And his brass-burden'd spear, and dire revenge 650
Denouncing, ardent, on the race of Troy.
At length, when we had sack'd the lofty town
Of Priam, laden with abundant spoils
He safe embark'd, neither by spear or shaft
Aught hurt, or in close fight by faulchion's edge, 655

² Πυραιών ειρεκα δώρων—Priam is said to have influenced by gifts the wife and mother of Eurypylus, to persuade him to the assistance of Troy, he being himself unwilling to engage. The passage, through defect of history, has long been dark, and commentators have adapted different senses to it, all conjectural. The Ceteans are said to have been a people of Mysia, of which Eurypylus was king.

As oft in war befalls, where wounds are dealt
Promiscuous, at the will of fiery Mars.

So I ; then striding large, the spirit thence
Withdrew of swift *Æacides*, along
The hoary¹³ mead pacing with joy elate
That I had blazon'd bright his son's renown.

The other souls of men by death dismiss'd
Stood mournful by, sad uttering each his woes ;
The soul alone I saw standing remote
Of Telamonian Ajax, still incensed
That in our public contest for the arms
Worn by Achilles, and by Thetis thrown
Into dispute, my claim had strongest proved,
Troy and Minerva judges of the cause.
Disastrous victory ! which I could wish
Not to have won, since for that armour's sake
The earth hath cover'd Ajax, in his form
And martial deeds superior far to all
The Grecians, Peleus' matchless son except.
I, seeking to appease him, thus began.

O Ajax, son of glorious Telamon !
Canst thou remember, even after death,
Thy wrath against me, kindled for the sake
Of those pernicious arms ? arms which the Gods
Ordain'd of such dire consequence to Greece,
Which caused thy death, our bulwark ! Thee we mourn
With grief perpetual, nor the death lament
Of Peleus' son, Achilles, more than thine.
Yet none is blameable ; Jove evermore
With bitterest hate pursued Achaea's host,
And he ordain'd thy death. Hero ! approach,
That thou may'st hear the words with which I seek
To soothe thee ! let thy long displeasure cease !
Quell all resentment in thy generous breast !

I spake ; nought answer'd he, but sullen join'd
His fellow ghosts ; yet, angry as he was,
I had prevail'd even on him to speak,
Or had, at least, accosted him again,

¹³ Κατ' ασφοδελον λειμωνα—Asphodel was planted on the graves, and around the tombs of the deceased, and hence the supposition, that the Stygian plain was clothed with asphodel. F.

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But that my bosom teem'd with strong desire
Urgent to see yet others of the dead.

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There saw I Minos, offspring famed of Jove ;
His golden sceptre in his hand, he sat
Judge of the dead ; they, pleading each in turn
His cause, some stood, some sat, filling the house
Whose spacious folding gates are never closed.

700

Orion next, huge ghost, engaged my view,
Droves urging o'er the grassy mead of beasts
Which he had slain, himself, on the wild hills,
With strong club arm'd of ever-during brass.

There also Tityus on the ground I saw
Extended, offspring of the glorious earth ;
Nine acres he o'erspread, and, at his side
Station'd, two vultures on his liver prey'd,
Scooping his entrails ; nor sufficed his hands
To fray them thence ; for he had sought to force
Latona, illustrious concubine of Jove,
What time the Goddess journey'd o'er the rocks
Of Pytho into pleasant Panopeus.

710

Next, suffering grievous torments, I beheld
Tantalus ; in a pool he stood, his chin
Wash'd by the wave ; thirst-parch'd he seem'd, but found
Nought to assuage his thirst ; for when he bow'd
His hoary head, ardent to quaff, the flood
Vanish'd absorb'd, and at his feet, adust
The soil appear'd, dried, instant, by the Gods.
Tall trees, fruit-laden, with inflected heads
Stoop'd to him, pears, pomegranates, apples bright,
The luscious fig, and unctuous olive smooth :
Which when with sudden grasp he would have seized,
Winds whirl'd them high into the dusky clouds.

720

725

There too, the hard-task'd Sisyphus I saw,
Thrusting¹⁴ before him, strenuous, a vast rock.
With hands and feet struggling, he shoved the stone
Up to a hill-top ; but the steep well-nigh
Vanquish'd, by some¹⁵ great force repulsed, the mass

730

¹⁴ *Baταζοντα* must have this sense interpreted by what follows. To attempt to make the English numbers expressive as the Greek, is a labour like that of Sisyphus. The translator has done what he could.

¹⁵ It is now, perhaps, impossible to ascertain with precision what Homer meant by the word *κραταιγίς*, which he uses only here and in the next Book,

Rush'd again obstinate down to the plain.
 Again stretch'd prone, severe he toil'd, the sweat
 Bathed all his weary limbs, and his head reek'd.

The might of Hercules I next survey'd ;
 His semblance ; for himself their banquet shares
 With the Immortal Gods, and in his arms
 Enfolds neat-footed Hebe, daughter fair
 Of Jove, and of his golden-sandal'd spouse.

Around him, clamorous as birds, the dead
 Swarm'd turbulent ; he gloomy-brow'd as night,
 With uncased bow and arrow on the string
 Peer'd terrible from side to side, as one
 Ever in act to shoot ; a dreadful belt

He bore athwart his bosom, thong'd with gold.
 There, broider'd shone many a stupendous form,
 Bears, wild-boars, lions with fire-flashing eyes,
 Fierce combats, battles, bloodshed, homicide.

The artist, author of that belt, none such
 Before produced, or after. Me his eye
 No sooner mark'd, than knowing me, in words
 By sorrow quick suggested, he began.

Laertes' noble son, for wiles renown'd !
 Ah hapless Hero ! thou art, doubtless, charged,
 Thou also, with some arduous labour, such
 As in the realms of day I once endured.

Son was I of Saturnian Jove, yet woes
 Immense sustain'd, subjected to a King
 Inferior far to me, whose harsh commands
 Enjoin'd me many a terrible exploit.

He even bade me on a time lead hence
 The dog, that task believing above all
 Impracticable ; yet from Ades him
 I dragg'd reluctant into light, by aid
 Of Hermes, and of Pallas azure-eyed.

So saying, he penetrated deep again
 The abode of Pluto ; but I still unmoved
 There stood expecting, curious, other shades
 To see of Heroes in old time deceased.

where it is the name of Scylla's dam.—*Αραιδης* is also of very doubtful explication.

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And now, more ancient worthies still, and whom
I wish'd, I had beheld Pirithoüs 770
And Theseus, glorious progeny of Gods,
But nations, first, numberless of the dead
Came shrieking hideous : me pale horror seized,
Lest awful Proserpine should thither send
The Gorgon-head from Ades, sight abhorr'd !
I, therefore, hasting to the vessel, bade
My crew embark, and cast the hawsers loose.
They, quick embarking, on the benches sat.
Down the Oceanus¹⁶ the current bore
My galley, winning, at the first, her way 780
With oars, then wafted by propitious gales.

¹⁶ The two first lines of the following book seem to ascertain the true meaning of the conclusion of this, and to prove sufficiently that by Ὡκεανὸς here, Homer could not possibly intend any other than a river. In those lines he tells us in the plainest terms, that *the ship left the stream of the river Oceanus, and arrived in the open sea.* Diôdorus Siculus informs us, that Ὡκεανὸς had been a name anciently given to the Nile. See Clarke.

BOOK XII.

ARGUMENT.

Ulysses, pursuing his narrative, relates his return from the shades to Circe's island, the precautions given him by that Goddess, his escape from the Sirens, and from Scylla and Charybdis ; his arrival in Sicily, where his companions, having slain and eaten the oxen of the Sun, are afterward shipwrecked and lost ; and concludes the whole with an account of his arrival, alone, on the mast of his vessel at the island of Calypso.

AND now, borne seaward from the river-stream
Of the Oceanus we plough'd again
The spacious Deep, and reach'd the *Æ*æan isle,
Where, daughter of the dawn, Aurora takes
Her choral sports, and whence the sun ascends.
5
We, there arriving, thrust our bark aground
On the smooth beach, then landed, and on the shore
Reposed, expectant of the sacred dawn.

But soon as day-spring's daughter rosy-palm'd
Look'd forth again, sending my friends before,
I bade them bring Elpenor's body down
From the abode of Circe to the beach.
Then on the utmost headland of the coast
We timber fell'd, and sorrowing o'er the dead,
His funeral rites water'd with tears profuse.
10
The dead consumed, and with the dead his arms,
We heap'd his tomb, and the sepulchral post
Erecting, fix'd his shapely oar aloft.

Thus, punctual, we perform'd ; nor our return
From Ades knew not Circe, but attired
In haste, ere long arrived, with whom appear'd
Her female train with plenteous viands charged,
And bright wine rosy-red. Amidst us all
Standing, the beauteous Goddess thus began.

Ah miserable ! who have sought the shades
Alive ! while others of the human race

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Die only once, appointed twice to die !
Come—take ye food ; drink wine ; and on the shore
All day regale, for ye shall hence again
At day-spring o'er the Deep ; but I will mark
Myself your future course, nor uninform'd
Leave you in aught, lest through some dire mistake,
By sea or land new miseries ye incur.

The Goddess spake, whose invitation kind
We glad accepted; thus we feasting sat
Till set of sun, and quaffing richest wine;
But when the sun went down and darkness fell,
My crew beside the hawsers slept, while me
The Goddess by the hand leading apart,
First bade me sit, then, seated opposite,
Enquired, minute, of all that I had seen,
And I, from first to last, recounted all.
Then thus the awful Goddess in return.

Thus far thy toils are finish'd. Now attend !	
Mark well my words, of which the Gods will sure	45
Themselves remind thee in the needful hour.	
First shalt thou reach the Sirens ; they the hearts	
Enchant of all who on their coast arrive.	
The wretch, who unforewarn'd approaching, hears	
The Sirens' voice, his wife and little-ones	50
Ne'er fly to gratulate his glad return ;	
But him the Sirens sitting in the meads	
Charm with mellifluous song, while all around	
The bones accumulated lie of men	
Now putrid, and the skins mouldering away.	55
But, pass them thou, and lest thy people hear	
Those warblings, ere thou yet approach, fill all	
Their ears with wax moulded between thy palms ;	
But as for thee—thou hear them if thou wilt.	
Yet let thy people bind thee to the mast	60
Erect, encompassing thy feet and arms	
With cordage well-secured to the mast-foot,	
So shalt thou, raptured, hear the Sirens' song.	
But if thou supplicate to be released,	
Or give such order, then, with added cords	65
Let thy companions bind thee still the more.	
When thus thy people shall have safely pass'd	

The Sirens by, think not from me to learn
 What course thou next shall steer ; two will occur ;
 Deliberate choose : I shall describe them both. 70

Here vaulted rocks impend, dash'd by the waves
 Immense of Amphitrite azure-eyed ;
 The blessed Gods those rocks, Erratic, call.
 Birds cannot pass them safe ; no, not the doves
 Which his ambrosia bear to Father Jove, 75
 But even of those doves the slippery rock
 Proves fatal still to one, for which the God
 Supplies another, lest the number fail.

No ship, what ship soever there arrives,
 Escapes them, but both mariners and planks
 Whelm'd under billows of the Deep, or, caught
 By fiery tempests, sudden disappear. 80

Those rocks the billow-cleaving bark alone,
 The Argo, further'd by the vows of all,
 Pass'd safely, sailing from \mathbb{A} æta's isle ;
 Nor she had pass'd, but surely dash'd had been 85
 On those huge rocks, but that, propitious still
 To Jason, Juno sped her safe along.

These rocks are two ; one lifts his summit sharp
 High as the spacious heavens, wrapt in dun clouds
 Perpetual, which nor autumn sees dispersed
 Nor summer, for the sun shines never there ; 90

No mortal man might climb it or descend,
 Though twice ten hands and twice ten feet he own'd,
 For it is levigated as by art. 95

Down scoop'd to Erebus, a cavern drear
 Yawns in the centre of its western side ;
 Pass it, renown'd Ulysses ! but aloof
 So far, that a keen arrow smartly sent 100

Forth from thy bark should fail to reach the cave.
 There Scylla dwells, and thence her howl is heard
 Tremendous ; shrill her voice is as the note
 Of hound new-whelp'd, but hideous her aspect,
 Such as no mortal man, nor even a God
 Encountering her, should with delight survey. 105

Her feet are twelve, all fore-feet ; six her necks
 Of hideous length, each clubb'd into a head
 Terrific, and each head with fangs is arm'd

In triple row, thick-planted, stored with death.
 Plunged to her middle in the hollow den
 She lurks, protruding from the black abyss
 Her heads, with which the ravening monster dives
 In quest of dolphins, dog-fish, or of prey
 More bulky, such as in the roaring gulfs
 Of Amphitrite without end abounds. 115
 It is no seaman's boast that e'er he slipp'd
 Her cavern by, unarm'd. In every mouth
 She bears upcaught a mariner away.
 The other rock, Ulysses, thou shalt find
 Humbler, a bow-shot only from the first ; 120
 On this a wild-fig grows broad-leaved, and here
 Charybdis dire ingulfs the sable flood.
 Each day she thrice disgorges, and each day
 Thrice swallows it. Ah ! well-forewarned beware
 What time she swallows, that thou come not nigh,
 For not himself, Neptune, could snatch thee thence, 125
 Close passing Scylla's rock, shoot swift thy bark
 Beyond it, since the loss of six alone
 Is better far than shipwreck made of all.
 So Circe spake, to whom I thus replied. 130
 Tell me, O Goddess, next, and tell me true !
 If, chance, from fell Charybdis I escape,
 May I not also save from Scylla's force
 My people, should the monster threaten them ?
 I said, and quick the Goddess in return. 135
 Unhappy ! can exploits and toils of war
 Still please thee ? yield'st not to the Gods themselves ?
 She is no mortal, but a deathless pest,
 Impracticable, savage, battle-proof.
 Defence is vain ; flight is thy sole resource. 140
 For should'st thou linger putting on thy arms
 Beside the rock, beware lest darting forth
 Her numerous heads, she seize with every mouth
 A Grecian, and with others, even thee.
 Pass therefore swift, and passing, loud invoke 145
 Cratais, mother of this plague of man,
 Who will forbid her to assail thee more.
 Thou, next, shall reach Thrinacia ; there, the beeves
 And fatted flocks graze numerous of the Sun ;

Seven herds ; as many flocks of snowy fleece ; 150
 Fifty in each ; they breed not, neither die,
 Nor are they kept by less than Goddesses,
 Lampetia fair, and Phæthusa, both
 By nymph Neæra to Hyperion borne.

Them, soon as she had train'd them to an age 155
 Proportion'd to that charge, their mother sent
 Into Thrinacia, there to dwell and keep
 Inviolate their father's flocks and herds.
 If, anxious for a safe return, thou spare
 Those herds and flocks, though after much endured, 160
 Ye may at last your Ithaca regain ;
 But should'st thou violate them, I foretell
 Destruction of thy ship and of thy crew,
 And though thyself escape, thou shalt return
 Late, in ill plight, and all thy friends destroy'd. 165

She ended, and the golden morning dawn'd.
 Then, all-divine, her graceful steps she turn'd
 Back through the isle, and at the beach arrived,
 I summon'd all my followers to ascend
 The bark again, and cast the hawsers loose. 170
 They, at my voice, embarking, fill'd in ranks
 The seats, and rowing, thresh'd the hoary flood.
 And now, melodious Circe, nymph divine,
 Sent after us a canvas-stretching breeze,
 Pleasant companion of our course, and we 175
 (The decks and benches clear'd) untoiling sat,
 While managed gales sped swift the bark along.
 Then, with dejected heart, thus I began.

Oh friends ! (for it is needful that not one
 Or two alone the admonition hear 180
 Of Circe, beauteous prophetess divine,)
 To all I speak, that whether we escape
 Or perish, all may be at least forewarn'd.
 She bids us, first, avoid the dangerous song
 Of the sweet Sirens and their flowery meads. 185
 Me only she permits those strains to hear ;
 But ye shall bind me with coercion strong
 Of cordage well-secured to the mast-foot,
 And by no struggles to be loosed of mine.
 But should I supplicate to be released 190

Or give such order, then, with added cords
Be it your part to bind me still the more.

Thus with distinct precaution I prepared
My people ; rapid in her course, meantime,
My gallant bark approach'd the Sirens' isle,
For brisk and favourable blew the wind.

195

Then fell the wind suddenly, and serene
A breathless calm ensued, while all around
The billows slumber'd, lull'd by power divine.
Up-sprang my people, and the folded sails
Bestowing in the hold, sat to their oars,
Which with their polish'd blades whiten'd the Deep.

200

I then, with edge of steel severing minute
A waxen cake, chafed it and moulded it
Between my palms, ere long the ductile mass
Grew warm, obedient to that ceaseless force,
And to Hyperion's all-pervading beams.

205

With that soft liniment I fill'd the ears
Of my companions, man by man, and they
My feet and arms with strong coercion bound
Of cordage to the mast-foot well-secured.

210

Then down they sat, and rowing, thresh'd the brine.
But when with rapid course we had arrived
Within such distance as a voice may reach,
Not unperceived by them the gliding bark
Approach'd, and thus harmonious they began.

215

Ulysses, Chief by every tongue extoll'd,
Achaia's boast, oh hither steer thy bark !
Here stay thy course, and listen to our lay !
These shores none passes in his sable ship
Till, first, the warblings of our voice he hear,
Then, happier hence and wiser he departs.
All that the Greeks endured, and all the ills
Inflicted by the Gods on Troy, we know,
Know all that passes on the boundless earth.

220

So they with voices sweet their music poured
Melodious on my ear, winning with ease
My heart's desire to listen, and by signs
I bade my people, instant, set me free.
But they incumbent row'd, and from their seats
Eurylochus and Perimedes sprang

225

230

With added cords to bind me still the more.
This danger past, and when the Siren's voice,
Now left remote, had lost its power to charm,
Then, my companions freeing from the wax 235
Their ears, deliver'd me from my restraint.
The island, left afar, soon I discern'd
Huge waves, and smoke, and horrid thunderings heard.
All sat aghast ; forth flew at once the oars
From every hand, and with a clash the waves 240
Smote altogether ; check'd, the galley stood,
By billow-sweeping oars no longer urged,
And I, throughout the bark, man after man
Encouraged all, addressing thus my crew.
We meet not, now, my friends, our first distress. 245
This evil is not greater than we found
When the huge Cyclops in his hollow den
Imprison'd us, yet even thence we 'scaped,
My intrepidity and fertile thought
Opening the way ; and we shall recollect 250
These dangers also, in due time, with joy.
Come then—pursue my counsel. Ye your seats
Still occupying, smite the furrow'd flood
With well-timed strokes, that by the will of Jove
We may escape, perchance, this death, secure. 255
To thee the pilot thus I speak, (my words
Mark thou, for at thy touch the rudder moves,)
This smoke, and these tumultuous waves avoid ;
Steer wide of both ; yet with an eye intent
On yonder rock, lest unaware thou hold 260
Too near a course, and plunge us into harm.
So I ; with whose advice all, quick, complied.
But Scylla I as yet named not, (that woe
Without a cure,) lest, terrified, my crew
Should all renounce their oars, and crowd below. 265
Just then, forgetful of the strict command
Of Circe not to arm, I cloth'd me all
In radiant armour, grasp'd two quivering spears,
And to the deck ascended at the prow,
Expecting earliest notice there, what time 270
The rock-bred Scylla should annoy my friends.
But I discern'd her not, nor could, although

To weariness of sight the dusky rock
 I vigilant explored. Thus, many a groan
 Heaving, we navigated sad the strait, 275
 For here stood Scylla, while Charybdis there
 With hoarse throat deep absorb'd the briny flood.
 Oft as she vomited the deluge forth,
 Like water cauldron'd o'er a furious fire
 The whirling Deep all murmur'd, and the spray 280
 On both those rocky summits fell in showers.
 But when she suck'd the salt wave down again,
 Then, all the pool appear'd wheeling about
 Within, the rock rebellow'd, and the sea
 Drawn off into that gulf disclosed to view 285
 The oozy bottom. Us pale horror seized.
 Thus, dreading death, with fast-set eyes we watch'd
 Charybdis; meantime, Scylla from the bark
 Caught six away, the bravest of my friends.
 With eyes, that moment, on my ship and crew 290
 Retorted, I beheld the legs and arms
 Of those whom she uplifted in the air;
 On me they call'd, my name, the last, last time
 Pronouncing then, in agony of heart.
 As when from some bold point among the rocks 295
 The angler, with his taper rod in hand,
 Casts forth his bait to snare the smaller fry,
 He swings away remote his guarded¹ line
 Then jerks his gasping prey forth from the Deep,
 So Scylla them raised gasping to the rock, 300
 And at her cavern's mouth devour'd them loud-
 Shrieking, and stretching forth to me their arms
 In sign of hopeless misery. Ne'er beheld
 These eyes in all the seas that I have roam'd,
 A sight so piteous, nor in all my toils. 305
 From Scylla and Charybdis dire escaped,
 We reach'd the noble island of the Sun
 Ere long, where bright Hyperion's beauteous herds
 Broad-fronted grazed, and his well-batten'd flocks.
 I, in the bark and on the sea, the voice 310
 Of oxen bellowing in hovels heard,

¹ They passed the line through a pipe of horn, to secure it against the fishes' bite.

And of loud bleating sheep ; then dropp'd the word
 Into my memory of the sightless Seer,
 Theban Tiresias, and the caution strict
 Of Circe, my Ææan monitress,
 Who with such force had caution'd me to avoid
 The island of the Sun, joy of mankind.
 Thus then to my companions, sad, I spake.

315

Hear ye, my friends ! although long time distress'd,
 The words prophetic of the Theban seer
 And of Ææan Circe, whose advice
 Was oft repeated to me to avoid
 This island of the Sun, joy of mankind.
 There, said the Goddess, dread your heaviest woes,
 Pass the isle, therefore, scudding swift away.

320

I ceased ; they me with consternation heard,
 And harshly thus Eurylochus replied.

325

Ulysses, ruthless Chief ! no toils impair
 Thy strength, of senseless iron thou art form'd,
 Who thy companions weary, and o'erwatch'd,
 Forbidd'st to disembark on this fair isle,
 Where now, at last, we might with ease regale.
 Thou, rash, command'st us, leaving it afar,
 To roam all night the Ocean's dreary waste ;
 But winds to ships injurious spring by night,
 And how shall we escape a dreadful death
 If, chance, a sudden gust from South arise
 Or stormy West, that dash in pieces oft
 The vessel, even in the Gods' despite ?
 Prepare we rather now, as night enjoins,
 Our evening fare beside the sable bark,
 In which at peep of day we may again
 Launch forth secure into the boundless flood.

330

335

340

He ceased, whom all applauded. Then I knew
 That sorrow by the will of adverse heaven
 Approach'd, and in wing'd accents thus replied.

345

I suffer force, Eurylochus ! and yield
 O'er-ruled by numbers. Come, then, swear ye all
 A solemn oath, that should we find an herd
 Or numerous flock, none here shall either sheep
 Or bullock slay, by appetite profane
 Seduced, but shall the viands eat content

350

Which from immortal Circe we received.

I spake; they readily a solemn oath
 Swore all, and when their oath was fully sworn, 355
 Within a creek where a fresh fountain rose
 They moor'd the bark, and issuing, began
 Brisk preparation of their evening cheer.
 But when nor hunger now nor thirst remain'd
 Unsated, recollecting, then, their friends 360
 By Scylla seized and at her cave devour'd,
 They mourn'd, nor ceased to mourn them, till they slept.
 The night's third portion come, when now the stars
 Had traversed the 'mid sky, cloud-gatherer Jove
 Call'd forth a vehement wind with tempest charged, 365
 Menacing earth and sea with pitchy clouds
 Tremendous, and the night fell dark from heaven.
 But when Aurora, daughter of the day,
 Look'd rosy forth, we haled, drawn inland more,
 Our bark into a grot, where nymphs were wont 370
 Graceful to tread the dance, or to repose.
 Convening there my friends, I thus began.

My friends! food fails us not, but bread is yet
 And wine on board. Abstain we from the herds,
 Lest harm ensue; for ye behold the flocks 375
 And herds of a most potent God, the Sun!
 Whose eye and watchful ear none may elude.

So saying, I sway'd the generous minds of all.
 A month complete the South wind ceaseless blew,
 Nor other wind blew next, save East and South, 380
 Yet they, while neither food nor rosy wine
 Fail'd them, the herds harm'd not, through fear to die.
 But, our provisions failing, they employ'd

Whole days in search of food, snaring with hooks
 Birds, fishes, of what kind soe'er they might, 385
 By famine urged. I solitary roam'd
 Meantime the isle, seeking by prayer to move
 Some God to show us a deliverance thence.
 When, roving thus the isle, I had at length
 Left all my crew remote, laving my hands 390
 Where shelter warm I found from the rude blast,
 I supplicated every Power above;
 But they my prayers answer'd with slumbers soft

Shed o'er my eyes, and with pernicious art
Eurylochus, the while, my friends harangued.

395

My friends ! afflicted as ye are, yet hear
A fellow-sufferer. Death, however caused,
Abhorrence moves in miserable man,
But death by famine is a fate of all
Most to be fear'd. Come—let us hither drive
And sacrifice to the Immortal Powers
The best of all the oxen of the Sun,
Resolving thus—that soon as we shall reach
Our native Ithaca, we will erect
To bright Hyperion an illustrious fane,
Which with magnificent and numerous gifts
We will enrich. But should he choose to sink
Our vessel, for his stately beeves incensed,
And should, with him, all heaven conspire our death,
I rather had with open mouth, at once,
Meeting the billows, perish, than by slow
And pining waste, here in this desert isle.

405

410

So spake Eurylochus, whom all approved.
Then, driving all the fattest of the herd
Few paces only, (for the sacred beeves
Grazed rarely distant from the bark) they stood
Compassing them around, and grasping each
Green foliage newly pluck'd from saplings tall,
(For barley none in all our bark remain'd)
Worshipp'd the Gods in prayer. Prayer made, they slew
And flay'd them, and the thighs with double fat
Investing, spread them o'er with slices crude.
No wine had they with which to consecrate
The blazing rites, but with libation poor
Of water hallow'd the interior parts.

415

420

425

Now, when the thighs were burnt, and each had shared
His portion of the maw, and when the rest
All slash'd and scored hung roasting at the fire,
Sleep, in that moment, suddenly my eyes
Forsaking, to the shore I bent my way.
But ere the station of our bark I reach'd,
The savoury steam greeted me. At the scent
I wept aloud, and to the Gods exclaim'd.
Oh Jupiter, and all ye Powers above !

430

With cruel sleep and fatal ye have lull'd
My cares to rest, such horrible offence
Meantime my rash companions have devised. 435

Then, flew long-stoled Lampetia to the Sun
At once with tidings of his slaughter'd beeves.
And he, incensed, the Immortals thus address'd. 440

Jove, and ye everlasting Powers divine !
Avenge me instant on the crew profane
Of Laertiades ; Ulysses' friends
Have dared to slay my beeves, which I with joy
Beheld, both when I climb'd the starry heavens,
And when to earth I sloped my "westring wheels," 445
But if they yield me not amercement due
And honourable for my loss, to Hell
I will descend, and give the ghosts my beams.

Then thus the cloud-assembler God replied. 450
Sun ! shine thou still on the Immortal powers,
And on the teeming earth, frail man's abode.
My cendent bolts can in a moment reach
And split their flying bark in the mid-sea.

These things Calypso told me, taught herself,
By herald Hermes, as she oft affirm'd. 455

But when, descending to the shore, I reach'd
At length my bark, with aspect stern and tone
I reprimanded them, yet no redress
Could frame or remedy—the beeves were dead.
Soon follow'd signs portentous sent from heaven. 460

The skins all crept, and on the spits the flesh
Both roast and raw bellow'd, as with the voice
Of living beeves. Thus my devoted friends
Driving the fattest oxen of the Sun,
Feasted six days entire ; but when the seventh 465

By mandate of Saturnian Jove appeared,
The storm then ceased to rage, and we, again
Embarking, launch'd our galley, rear'd the mast,
And gave our unfurl'd canvas to the wind. 470

The island left afar, and other land
Appearing none, but sky alone and sea,
Right o'er the hollow bark Saturnian Jove
Hung a cœrulean cloud, darkening the Deep.
Not long my vessel ran, for blowing wild, 475

Now came shrill Zephyrus ; a stormy gust
Snapp'd sheer the shrouds on both sides ; backward fell
The mast, and with loose tackle strew'd the hold ;
Striking the pilot in the stern, it crush'd
His skull together ; he a diver's plunge
Made downward, and his noble spirit fled. 480
Meantime, Jove thundering, hurl'd into the ship
His bolts ; she, smitten by the fires of Jove,
Quaked all her length ; with sulphur fill'd she reek'd,
And o'er her sides headlong my people plunged
Like sea-mews, interdicted by that stroke 485
Of wrath divine to hope their country more.
But I the vessel still paced to and fro,
Till, sever'd by the boisterous waves, her sides
Forsook the keel now left to float alone. 490
Snapp'd where it join'd the keel the mast had fallen,
But fell encircled with a leathern brace,
Which it retained ; binding with this the mast
And keel together, on them both I sat,
Borne helpless onward by the dreadful gale. 495
And now the West subsided, and the South
Arose instead, with misery charged for me,
That I might measure back my course again
To dire Charybdis. All night long I drove,
And when the sun arose, at Scylla's rock 500
Once more, and at Charybdis' gulf arrived.
It was the time when she absorb'd profound
The briny flood, but by a wave upborne
I seized the branches fast of the wild-fig².
To which, bat-like, I clung ; yet where to fix 505
My foot secure found not, or where to ascend,
For distant lay the roots, and distant shot
The largest arms erect into the air,
O'ershadowing all Charybdis ; therefore hard
I clench'd the boughs, till she disgorged again 510
Both keel and mast. Not undesired by me
They came, though late ; for at what hour the judge,
After decision made of numerous strifes³
Between young candidates for honour, leaves

² See line 120.

³ He had therefore held by the fig-tree from sun-rise till afternoon.

The forum for refreshment' sake at home,
Then was it that the mast and keel emerged. 515
Deliver'd to a voluntary fall,
Fast by those beams I dash'd into the flood,
And seated on them both, with oary palms
Impell'd them ; nor the Sire of Gods and men
Permitted Scylla to discern me more,
Else had I perish'd by her fangs at last.
Nine days I floated thence, and on the tenth
Dark night, the Gods convey'd me to the isle
Ogygia, habitation of divine 520
Calypso, by whose hospitable aid
And assiduity my strength revived.
But wherefore this ? ye have already learn'd
That history, thou and thy illustrious spouse ;
I told it yesterday, and hate a tale
Once amply told, then, needless, traced again. 530

BOOK XIII.

A R G U M E N T.

Ulysses having finished his narrative, and received additional presents from the Phœaciens, embarks ; he is conveyed in his sleep to Ithaca, and in his sleep is landed on that island. The ship that carried him is, in her return, transformed by Neptune to a rock.

Minerva meets him on the shore, enables him to recollect his country, which, till enlightened by her, he believed to be a country strange to him, and they concert together the means of destroying the suitors. The Goddess then repairs to Sparta, to call thence Telemachus, and Ulysses, by her aid disguised like a beggar, proceeds toward the cottage of Eumeus.

He ceased ; the whole assembly silent sat,
Charm'd into ecstasy with his discourse
Throughout the twilight hall. Then, thus the King.

Ulysses, since beneath my brazen dome
Sublime thou hast arrived, like woes, I trust,
Thou shalt not in thy voyage hence sustain
By tempests toss'd, though much to woe inured.
To you, who daily in my palace quaff
Your princely meed of generous wine, and hear
The sacred bard, my pleasure thus I speak.
The robes, wrought gold, and all the other gifts
To this our guest, by the Phœacian Chiefs
Brought hither, in the sumptuous coffer lie.
But come—present ye to the stranger, each,
An ample tripod also, with a vase
Of smaller size, for which we will be paid
By public impost ; for the charge of all
Excessive were by one alone defray'd.

So spake Alcinoüs, and his counsel pleased ;
Then, all retiring, sought repose at home.
But when Aurora, daughter of the dawn,
Look'd rosy forth, each hasted to the bark

5

10

15

20

With his illustrious present, which the might
Of King Alcinoüs, who himself her sides
Ascended, safe beneath the seats bestowed,
Lest it should harm or hinder, while he toil'd
In rowing, some Phœacian of the crew.
The palace of Alcinoüs seeking next,
Together, they prepared a new regale.

25

For them, in sacrifice, the ¹sacred might
Of King Alcinoüs slew an ox to Jove
Saturnian, cloud-girt governor of all.
The thighs with fire prepared, all glad partook
The noble feast; meantime the bard divine
Sang, sweet Demodocus, the people's joy.
But oft Ulysses to the radiant sun
Turn'd wistful eyes, anxious for his decline,
Nor longer, now, patient of dull delay.

30

As when some hungry swain whose sable beeves
Have through the fallow dragg'd his ponderous plough
All day, the setting sun views with delight
For supper' sake, which with tired feet he seeks,
So welcome to Ulysses' eyes appear'd
The sun-set of that eve; directing, then,
His speech to maritime Phœacia's sons,
But to Alcinoüs chiefly, thus he said.

35

Alcinoüs, o'er Phœacia's realm supreme!
Libation made, dismiss ye me in peace,
And farewell all! for what I wish'd, I have,
Conductors hence, and honourable gifts
With which heaven prosper me! and may the Gods
Vouchsafe to me, at my return, to find
All safe, my spotless consort and my friends!
May ye, whom here I leave, gladden your wives
And see your children blest, and may the Powers
Immortal with all good enrich you all,
And from calamity preserve the land!

45

He ended; they unanimous, his speech
Applauded loud, and bade dismiss the guest
Who had so wisely spoken and so well.
Then thus Alcinoüs to his herald spake.

50

Pontonoüs! charging high the beaker, bear

55

¹ Ιερον μενος Αλκινουοι.

To every guest beneath our roof the wine,
That, prayer preferred to the eternal Sire,
We may dismiss our inmate to his home.

65

Then bore Pontonoüs to every guest
The brimming cup ; they, where they sat, perform'd
Libation due ; but the illustrious Chief
Ulysses, from his seat arising, placed
A massy goblet in Areta's hand,
To whom in accents wing'd, grateful, he said.

70

Farewell, O Queen, a long farewell, till age
Arrive, and death, the appointed lot of all !
I go ; but be this people, and the King
Alcinoüs, and thy progeny, thy joy
Yet many a year beneath this glorious roof !

75

So saying, the Hero through the palace-gate
Issued, whom, by Alcinoüs' command,
The royal herald to his vessel led.
Three maidens also of Areta's train
His steps attended ; one, the robe well-bleach'd
And tunic bore ; the corded coffer, one ;
And food the third, with wine of crimson hue.
Arriving where the galley rode, each gave
Her charge to some brave mariner on board,
And all was safely stow'd. Meantime were spread
Linen and arras on the deck astern,
For his secure repose. And now the Chief
Himself embarking, silent laid him down.
Then every rower to his bench repair'd ;
They drew the loosen'd cable from its hold

80

In the drill'd rock, and resupine, at once
With lusty strokes upturn'd the flashing waves.
His eye-lids soon sleep, falling as a dew,
Closed fast, death's simular, in sight the same.
She, as four harness'd stallions o'er the plain
Shooting together at the scourge's stroke,
Toss high their manes, and rapid scour along,
So mounted she the waves, while dark the flood
Roll'd after her of the resounding Deep.
Steady she ran and safe, passing in speed
The falcon, swiftest of the fowls of heaven ;
With such rapidity she cut the waves,

85

90

95

100

An Hero bearing like the Gods above
 In wisdom, one familiar long with woe
 In fight sustain'd, and on the perilous flood,
 Though sleeping now serenely, and resign'd
 To sweet oblivion of all sorrow past. 105

The brightest star of heaven, precursor chief
 Of day-spring, now arose, when at the isle
 (Her voyage soon perform'd) the bark arrived.

There is a port sacred in Ithaca
 To Phorcys, hoary ancient of the Deep,
 Form'd by converging shores, prominent both
 And both abrupt, which from the spacious bay
 Exclude all boisterous winds ; within it, ships
 (The port once gain'd) uncabled ride secure. 115

An olive, at the haven's head, expands
 Her branches wide, near to a pleasant cave
 Umbrageous, to the nymphs devoted named
 The Naiads. In that cave beakers of stone
 And jars are seen ; bees lodge their honey there ;
 And there, on slender spindles of the rock
 The nymphs of rivers weave their wondrous robes. 120

Perennial springs water it, and it shows
 A twofold entrance ; ingress one affords
 To mortal man, which Northward looks direct,
 But holier is the Southern far ; by that
 No mortal enters, but the Gods alone.

Familiar with that port before, they push'd
 The vessel in ; she, rapid, plough'd the sands
 With half her keel, such rowers urged her on.
 Descending from the well-bench'd bark ashore,
 They lifted forth Ulysses first, with all

His splendid couch complete, then laid him down,
 Still wrapt in balmy slumber, on the sands. 135

His treasures next, by the Phœacian Chiefs
 At his departure given him as the meed
 Due to his wisdom, at the olive's foot
 They heap'd, without the road, lest while he slept
 Some passing traveller should rifle them. 140

Then homeward thence they sped. Nor Ocean's God
 His threats forgot denounced against divine
 Ulysses, but with Jove thus first advised.

Eternal Sire ! I shall no longer share
Respect and reverence among the Gods,
Since now Phœacia's mortal race have ceased
To honour me, though from myself derived.
It was my purpose, that by many an ill
Harass'd, Ulysses should have reach'd his home,
Although to intercept him, whose return
Thyself had promised, ne'er was my intent.
But him fast-sleeping swiftly o'er the waves
They have conducted, and have set him down
In Ithaca, with countless gifts enrich'd,
With brass, and tissued raiment, and with gold ;
Much treasure ! more than he had home convey'd
Even had he arrived with all his share
Allotted to him of the spoils of Troy.

145

To whom the cloud-assembler God replied.
What hast thou spoken, Shaker of the shores,
Wide-ruling Neptune ? Fear not ; thee the Gods
Will ne'er despise ; dangerous were the deed
To cast dishonour on a God by birth
More ancient, and more potent far than they.
But if, profanely rash, a mortal man
Should dare to slight thee, to avenge the wrong
Some future day is ever in thy power.
Accomplish all thy pleasure, thou art free.

160

Him answer'd then the Shaker of the shores.
Jove cloud-enthroned ! that pleasure I would soon
Perform as thou hast said, but that I watch
Thy mind continual, fearful to offend.
My purpose is, now to destroy amid
The dreary Deep yon fair Phœacian bark,
Return'd from safe conveyance of her freight ;
So shall they waft such wanderers home no more,
And she shall hide their city, to a rock
Transform'd of mountainous o'ershadowing size.

170

Him then Jove answer'd, gatherer of the clouds.
Perform it, O my brother, and the deed
Thus done, shall best be done ;—What time the people
Shall from the city her approach descry,
Fix her to stone transform'd, but still in shape
A gallant bark, near to the coast, that all

180

185

May wonder, seeing her transform'd to stone
Of size to hide their city from the view.

These words once heard, the Shaker of the shores
Instant to Scheria, maritime abode
Of the Phœaciens, went. Arrived, he watch'd. 190
And now the flying bark full near approach'd,
When Neptune, meeting her, with outspread palm
Depress'd her at a stroke, and she became
Deep-rooted stone. Then Neptune went his way.
Phœacia's ship-ennobled sons meantime
Conferring stood, and thus in accents wing'd,
The amazed spectator to his fellow spake.

Ah ! who hath sudden check'd the vessel's course
Homeward ? This moment she was all in view.

Thus they, unconscious of the cause, to whom 200
Alcinoüs, instructing them, replied.

Ye Gods ! a prophecy now strikes my mind
With force, my father's. He was wont to say—
Neptune resents it, that we safe conduct
Natives of every region to their home. 205
He also spake, prophetic, of a day
When a Phœacian gallant bark, return'd
After conveyance of a stranger hence,
Should perish in the dreary Deep, and changed
To a huge mountain, cover all the town. 210

So spake my father, all whose words we see
This day fulfill'd. Thus, therefore, act we all
Unanimous ; henceforth no longer bear
The stranger home, when such shall here arrive ;
And we will sacrifice, without delay, 215
Twelve chosen bulls to Neptune, if, perchance,
He will commiserate us, and forbear
To hide our town behind a mountain's height.

He spake, they, terrified, the bulls prepared.
Thus all Phœacia's Senators and Chiefs
His altar compassing, in prayer adored
The Ocean's God. Meantime Ulysses woke,
Unconscious where ; stretch'd on his native soil
He lay, and knew it not, long time exiled.
For Pallas, progeny of Jove, a cloud 220
Drew dense around him, that ere yet agnized

By others, he might wisdom learn from her,
 Neither to citizens, nor yet to friends
 Reveal'd, nor even to his own espoused,
 Till, first, he should avenge complete his wrongs
 Domestic from those suitors proud sustain'd.

230

All objects, therefore, in the Hero's eyes
 Seem'd alien, foot-paths long, commodious ports,
 Heaven-climbing rocks, and trees of amplest growth.
 Arising, fixt he stood, his native soil
 Contemplating, till with expanded palms
 Both thighs he smote, and plaintive thus began.

235

Ah me ! what mortal race inhabits here ?
 Rude are they, contumacious and unjust,
 Or hospitable, and who fear the Gods ?
 Where now shall I secrete these numerous stores ?
 Where wander I, myself ? I would that still
 Phæacians own'd them, and I had arrived
 In the dominions of some other King

240

Magnanimous, who would have entertain'd
 And sent me to my native home secure !
 Now, neither know I where to place my wealth,
 Nor can I leave it here, lest it become
 Another's prey. Alas ! Phæacia's Chiefs

245

Not altogether wise I deem or just,
 Who have misplaced me in another land,
 Promised to bear me to the pleasant shores
 Of Ithaca, but have not so perform'd.

250

Jove, guardian of the suppliant's rights, who all
 Transgressors marks, and punishes all wrong,
 Avenge me on the treacherous race !—but hold—
 I will revise my stores, so shall I know
 If they have left me here of aught despoil'd.

255

So saying, he number'd carefully the gold,
 The vases, tripods bright, and tissued robes,
 But nothing miss'd of all. Then he bewail'd
 His native isle, with pensive steps and slow
 Pacing the border of the billowy flood,
 Forlorn ; but while he wept, Pallas approach'd,
 In form a shepherd stripling, girlish fair
 In feature, such as are the sons of Kings ;
 A sumptuous mantle o'er his shoulders hung

260

265

Twice-folded, sandals his nice feet upbore,
And a smooth javelin glitter'd in his hand.
Ulysses, joyful at the sight, his steps
Turn'd brisk toward her, whom he thus address'd.

Sweet youth ! since thee, of all mankind, I first
Encounter in this land unknown, all hail !
Come not with purposes of harm to me !
These save, and save me also. I prefer
To thee, as to some God, my prayer, and clasp
Thy knees a suppliant. Say, and tell me true,
What land ? what people ? who inhabit here ?
Is this some isle delightful, or a shore
Of fruitful main-land sloping to the sea ?

Then Pallas thus, Goddess cœrulean-eyed.
Stranger ! thou sure art simple, or hast dwelt
Far distant hence, if of this land thou ask.
It is not, trust me, of so little note,
But known to many, both to those who dwell
Toward the sun-rise, and to others placed
Behind it, distant in the dusky West.
Rugged it is, not yielding level course
To the swift steed, and yet no barren spot,
However small, but rich in wheat and wine ;
Nor wants it rain or fertilizing dew,
But pasture green to goats and beeves affords,
Trees of all kinds, and fountains never dry.
Ithaca therefore, stranger, is a name
Known even at Troy, a city, by report,
At no small distance from Achaia's shore.

The Goddess ceased ; then, toil-enduring Chief
Ulysses, happy in his native land,
(So taught by Pallas, progeny of Jove)
In accents wing'd her answering, utter'd prompt
Not truth, but figments to truth opposite,
For guile in him stood never at a pause.

O'er yonder flood, even in spacious² Crete
I heard of Ithaca, where now, it seems,
I have myself with these my stores arrived ;

² Homer dates all the fictions of Ulysses from Crete, as if he meant to pass a similar censure on the Cretans to that quoted by St. Paul—Κρητες αει ψευσατ.

Not richer stores than, flying thence, I left
 To my own children ; for from Crete I fled
 For slaughter of Orsilochus the swift,
 Son of Idomeneus, whom none in speed
 Could equal throughout all that spacious isle.
 His purpose was to plunder me of all
 My Trojan spoils, which to obtain much woe
 I had in battle and by storms endured,
 For that I would not gratify his Sire,
 Fighting beside him in the fields of Troy,
 But led a different band. Him from the field
 Returning homeward, with my brazen spear
 I smote, in ambush waiting his return
 At the road-side, with a confederate friend.

310

Unwonted darkness over all the heavens
 That night prevailed, nor any eye of man
 Observed us, but unseen I slew the youth.
 No sooner then with my sharp spear of life
 I had bereft him, than I sought a ship
 Mann'd by renown'd Phœaciens, whom with gifts
 Part of my spoils, and by requests, I won.

320

I bade them land me on the Pylian shore,
 Or in fair Elis by the Epeans ruled ;
 But they, reluctant, were by violent winds
 Driven devious thence, for fraud they purposed none.
 Thus through constraint we here arrived by night,
 And with much difficulty push'd the ship
 Into safe harbour, nor was mention made
 Of food by any, though all needed food,
 But disembark'd in haste, on shore we lay.

330

I, weary, slept profound, and they my goods
 Forth heaving from the bark, beside me placed
 The treasures on the sea-beach, where I slept,
 Then reembarking, to the populous coast
 Steer'd of Sidonia, and me left forlorn.

335

He ceased ; then smiled Minerva azure-eyed
 And stroked his cheek, in form a woman now,
 Beauteous, majestic, in all elegant arts
 Accomplish'd, and with accents wing'd replied.

340

Who passes thee in artifice well-framed
 And in imposture various, need shall find

345

Of all his policy, although a God.
 Canst thou not cease, inventive as thou art
 And subtle, from the wiles which thou hast loved
 Since thou wast infant, and from tricks of speech
 Delusive, even in thy native land ? 350

But come, dismiss we these ingenious shifts
 From our discourse, in which we both excel ;
 For thou of all men in expedients most
 Abound'st and eloquence, and I, throughout
 All heaven have praise for wisdom and for art. 355

And know'st thou not thine Athenæan aid,
 Pallas, Jove's daughter, who in all thy toils
 Assist thee and defend ? I gave thee power
 To engage the hearts of all Phœacia's sons, 360
 And here arrive even now, counsels to frame
 Discreet with thee, and to conceal the stores
 Given to thee by the rich Phœacian Chiefs
 On my suggestion, at thy going thence.

I will inform thee also what distress
 And hardship under thy own palace-roof
 Thou must endure ; which since constraint enjoins,
 Bear patiently, and neither man apprise
 Nor woman that thou hast arrived forlorn
 And vagabond, but silent undergo 370

What wrongs soever from the hands of men.

To whom Ulysses, ever wise, replied.
 O Goddess ! thou art able to elude,
 Wherever met, the keenest eye of man,
 For thou all shapes assumest ; yet this I know
 Certainly, that I ever found thee kind, 375
 Long as Achaia's Heroes fought at Troy ;
 But when (the lofty towers of Priam laid
 In dust) we re-embark'd, and by the will
 Of heaven Achaia's fleet was scatter'd wide,
 Thenceforth, O daughter wise of Jove, I thee 380
 Saw not, nor thy appearance in my ship
 Once mark'd, to rid me of my numerous woes,
 But always bearing in my breast a heart
 With anguish riven, I roam'd, till by the Gods
 Relieved at length, and till with gracious words 385
 Thyself didst in Phœacia's opulent land

Confirm my courage, and becamest my guide.
But I adjure thee in thy father's name—
O tell me truly, (for I cannot hope
That I have reach'd fair Ithaca ; I tread
Some other soil, and thou affirm'st it mine
To mock me merely, and deceive,) oh say—
Am I in Ithaca ? in truth, at home ?

390

Thus then Minerva the cœrulean-eyed.
Such caution ever in thy breast prevails
Distrustful ; but I know thee eloquent,
With wisdom and with ready thought endued,
And cannot leave thee therefore thus distress'd.
For what man, save Ulysses, new-return'd
After long wanderings, would not pant to see
At once his home, his children, and his wife ?
But thou preferr'st neither to know nor ask
Concerning them, till some experience first
Thou make of her whose wasted youth is spent
In barren solitude, and who in tears
Ceaseless her nights and woful days consumes.
I ne'er was ignorant, but well foreknew
That not till after loss of all thy friends
Thou should'st return ; but loth I was to oppose
Neptune, my father's brother, sore incensed
For his son's sake, deprived of sight by thee.
But I will give thee proof—come now—survey
These marks of Ithaca, and be convinced.

405

410

415

This is the port of Phœreys, sea-born sage ;
That, the huge olive at the haven's head ;
Fast by it, thou behold'st the pleasant cove
Umbrageous, to the nymphs devoted named
The Naiads ; this the broad-arch'd cavern is
Where thou wast wont to offer to the nymphs
Many a whole hecatomb ; and yonder stands
The mountain Neritus with forests clothed.

420

So saying, the Goddess scatter'd from before
His eyes all darkness, and he knew the land.
Then felt Ulysses, Hero toil-inured,
Transport unutterable, seeing plain
Once more his native isle. He kiss'd the glebe,
And with uplifted hands the nymphs adored.

425

Nymphs, Naiads, Jove's own daughters ! I despair'd
 To see you more, whom yet with happy vows
 I now can hail again. Gifts, as of old,
 We will hereafter at your shrines present,
 If Jove-born Pallas, huntress of the spoils,
 Grant life to me, and manhood to my son.

430

Then Pallas, blue-eyed progeny of Jove.
 Take courage ; trouble not thy mind with thoughts
 Now needless. Haste—delay not—far within
 This hallow'd cave's recess place we at once
 Thy precious stores, that they may thine remain,
 Then muse together on thy wisest course.

435

440

So saying, the Goddess enter'd deep the cave
 Caliginous, and its secret nooks explored
 From side to side ; meantime Ulysses brought
 All his stores into it, the gold, the brass,
 And robes magnificent, his gifts received
 From the Phœacians ; safe he lodged them all,
 And Pallas, daughter of Jove ægis-arm'd,
 Closed fast, herself, the cavern with a stone.

445

Then, on the consecrated olive's root
 Both seated, they in consultation plann'd
 The deaths of those injurious suitors proud,
 And Pallas, blue-eyed Goddess, thus began.

450

Laertes' noble son, Ulysses ! think
 By what means likeliest thou shalt assail
 Those shameless suitors, who have now control'd
 Three years thy family, thy matchless wife
 With language amorous and with spousal gifts
 Urging importunate ; but she, with tears
 Watching thy wish'd return, hope gives to all
 By messages of promise sent to each,
 Framing far other purposes the while.

455

460

Then answer thus Ulysses wise return'd.

Ah, Agamemnon's miserable fate
 Had surely met me in my own abode,
 But for thy gracious warning, power divine !
 Come then—Devise the means ; teach me, thyself,
 The way to vengeance, and my soul inspire
 With daring fortitude, as when we loosed
 Her radiant frontlet from the brows of Troy.

465

Would'st thou with equal zeal, O Pallas ! aid
 Thy servant here, I would encounter thrice
 An hundred enemies, let me but perceive
 Thy dread divinity my prompt ally.

470

Him answer'd then Pallas coerulean-eyed.
 And such I will be ; not unmark'd by me,
 (Let once our time of enterprize arrive)
 Shalt thou assail them. Many, as I judge,
 Of those proud suitors who devour thy wealth
 Shall leave their brains then on thy palace-floor.
 But come. Behold ! I will disguise thee so
 That none shall know thee ; I will parch the skin
 On thy fair body ; I will cause thee shed
 Thy wavy locks ; I will enfold thee round
 In such a kirtle as the eyes of all
 Shall loathe to look on ; and I will deform
 With blurring rheums thy eyes, so vivid erst ;
 So shall the suitors deem thee, and thy wife,
 And thy own son whom thou didst leave at home,
 Some sordid wretch obscure. But seek thou first
 Thy swine-herd's mansion ; he, alike, intends
 Thy good, and loves affectionate thy son
 And thy Penelope ; thou shalt find the swain
 Tending his herd ; they feed beneath the rock
 Corax, at side of Arethusa's fount,
 On acorns dieted, nutritious food
 To them, and drinking of the limpid stream.
 There waiting, question him of thy concerns,
 While I from Sparta praised for women fair
 Call home thy son Telemachus, a guest
 With Menelaus now, whom to consult
 In spacious Lacedæmon he is gone,
 Anxious to learn if yet his father lives.

485

490

495

500

505

To whom Ulysses, ever-wise, replied.
 And why, alas ! all-knowing as thou art,
 Him left'st thou ignorant ? was it that he,
 He also, wand'ring wide the barren Deep,
 Might suffer woe, while these devour his wealth ?

Him answer'd then Pallas coerulean-eyed.
 Grieve thou not much for him. I sent him forth
 Myself, that there arrived, he might acquire

510

Honour and fame. No sufferings finds he there,
But in Atrides' palace safe resides,
Enjoying all abundance. Him, in truth,
The suitors watch close ambush'd on the Deep,
Intent to slay him ere he reach his home,
But shall not as I judge, till of themselves
The earth hide some who make thee, now, a prey.

515

So saying, the Goddess touch'd him with a wand.
At once o'er all his agile limbs she parch'd
The polish'd skin ; she wither'd to the root
His wavy locks, and clothed him with the hide
Deform'd of wrinkled age ; she charged with rheums
His eyes before so vivid, and a cloak
And kirtle gave him, tatter'd both, and foul,
And smutch'd with smoke ; then casting over all
An huge old deer-skin bald, with a long staff
She furnish'd him, and with a wallet patch'd
On all sides, dangling by a twisted thong.

520

Thus all their plan adjusted, different ways
They took, and she, seeking Ulysses' son,
To Lacedæmon's spacious realm repair'd.

525

530

BOOK XIV.

ARGUMENT.

Ulysses arriving at the house of Eumæus, is hospitably entertained, and spends the night there.

LEAVING the haven-side, he turn'd his steps
 Into a rugged path, which over hills
 Mantled with trees led him to the abode
 By Pallas mention'd of his noble¹ friend
 The swine-herd, who of all Ulysses' train
 Watch'd with most diligence his rural stores. 5
 Him sitting in the vestibule he found
 Of his own airy lodge commodious, built
 Amidst a level lawn. That structure neat
 Eumæus, in the absence of his Lord, 10
 Had raised, himself, with stones from quarries hewn,
 Unaided by Laertes or the Queen.
 With tangled thorns he fenced it safe around,
 And with contiguous stakes riven from the trunks
 Of solid oak black-grain'd hemm'd it without. 15
 Twelve pens he made within, all side by side,
 Lairs for his swine, and fast-immured in each
 Lay fifty pregnant females on the floor.
 The males all slept without, less numerous far,
 Thinn'd by the princely wooers at their feasts 20
 Continual, for to them he ever sent
 The fattest of his saginated charge.
 Three hundred, still, and sixty brawns remained.
 Four mastiffs in adjoining kennels lay,
 Resembling wild-beasts, nourish'd at the board 25
 Of the illustrious steward of the styes.

¹ Δῖος ἴφορβος.—The swine-herd's was therefore in those days, and in that country, an occupation honourable as well as useful. Barnes deems the epithet δῖος significant of his noble birth. Vide Clarke in loco.

Himself sat fitting sandals to his feet,
 Carved from a stain'd ox-hide. Four hinds he kept,
 Now busied here and there ; three in the pens
 Were occupied ; meantime, the fourth had sought 30
 The city, whither, for the suitors' use,
 With no good-will, but by constraint, he drove
 A boar, that sacrificing to the Gods,
 The imperious guests might on his flesh regale.

Soon as those clamorous watch-dogs the approach 35
 Saw of Ulysses, baying loud, they ran
 Toward him ; he, as ever, well-advised,
 Squatted, and let his staff fall from his hand.
 Yet foul indignity he had endured
 Even there, at his own farm, but that the swain, 40
 Following his dogs in haste, sprang through the porch
 To his assistance, letting fall the hide.
 With chiding voice and vollied stones he soon
 Drove them apart, and thus his Lord bespake.

Old man ! one moment more, and these my dogs 45
 Had, past doubt, worried thee, who should'st have proved,
 So slain, a source of obloquy to me.
 But other pangs the Gods, and other woes
 To me have given, who here lamenting sit
 My godlike master, and his fatted swine 50
 Nourish for others' use, while he, perchance,
 A wanderer in some foreign city seeks
 Fit sustenance, and none obtains, if still
 Indeed he live, and view the light of day.
 But, old friend ! follow me into the house, 55
 That thou, at least, with plenteous food refresh'd,
 And cheer'd with wine sufficient, may'st disclose
 Both who thou art, and all that thou hast borne.

So saying, the generous swine-herd introduced
 Ulysses, and thick bundles spread of twigs 60
 Beneath him, cover'd with the shaggy skin
 Of a wild goat, of which he made his couch
 Easy and large ; the Hero, so received,
 Rejoiced, and thus his gratitude express'd.

Jove grant thee and the Gods above, my host, 65
 For such beneficence thy chief desire !
 To whom, Eumæus, thou didst thus reply.

My guest ! I should offend, treating with scorn
 The stranger, though a poorer should arrive
 Than even thyself ; for all the poor that are,
 And all the strangers are the care of Jove.

70

Little, and with good will, is all that lies
 Within my scope ; no man can much expect
 From servants living in continual fear
 Under young masters ; for the Gods, no doubt,
 Have intercepted my own Lord's return,
 From whom great kindness I had, else, received,
 With such a recompense as servants gain
 From generous masters, house and competence,
 And lovely wife from many a wooer won,
 Whose industry should have requited well
 His goodness, with such blessing from the Gods
 As now attends me in my present charge.

75

Much had I, therefore, prosper'd, had my Lord
 Grown old at home ; but he hath died.—I would
 That the whole house of Helen, one and all,
 Might perish too, for she hath many slain
 Who, like my master, went glory to win
 For Agamemnon in the fields of Troy.

85

So saying, he girdled, quick, his tunic close,
 And issuing, sought the styes ; thence bringing two
 Of the imprison'd herd, he slaughter'd both,
 Singed them, and slash'd and spitted them, and placed
 The whole well-roasted banquet, spits and all,
 Reeking before Ulysses ; last with flour
 He sprinkled them, and filling with rich wine
 His ivy goblet, to his master sat
 Opposite, whom inviting thus he said.

90

Now, eat my guest ! such as a servant may
 I set before thee, neither large of growth
 Nor fat ; the fatted—those the suitors eat,
 Fearless of heaven, and pitiless of man.
 Yet deeds unjust as theirs the blessed Gods
 Love not ; they honour equity and right.
 Even an hostile band when they invade
 A foreign shore, which by consent of Jove
 They plunder, and with laden ships depart,
 Even they with terrors quake of wrath divine.

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But these are wiser ; these must sure have learn'd
 From some true oracle my master's death, 110
 Who neither deign with decency to woo,
 Nor yet to seek their homes, but boldly waste
 His substance, shameless now, and sparing nought.
 Jove ne'er hath given us yet the night or day
 When with a single victim, or with two
 They would content them, and his empty jars 115
 Witness how fast the squanderers use his wine.
 Time was when he was rich indeed ; such wealth
 No Hero own'd on yonder continent,
 Nor yet in Ithaca ; no twenty Chiefs
 Could match with all their treasures his alone ; 120
 I tell thee their amount. Twelve herds of his
 The mainland² graze ; as many flocks of sheep ;
 As many droves of swine ; and hirelings there
 And servants of his own feed for his use,
 As many numerous flocks of goats ; his goats 125
 (Not fewer than eleven numerous flocks)
 Here also graze the margin of his fields
 Under the eye of servants well-approved,
 And every servant, every day, brings home
 The goat of all his flock largest and best. 130
 But as for me, I have these swine in charge,
 Of which, selected with exactest care
 From all the herd, I send the prime to them.

He ceased : meantime Ulysses ate and drank
 Voracious, meditating, mute, the death 135
 Of those proud suitors. His repast, at length,
 Concluded, and his appetite sufficed,
 Eumæus gave him, charged with wine, the cup
 From which he drank himself ; he, glad, received
 The boon, and in wing'd accents thus began. 140

My friend, and who was he, wealthy and brave
 As thou describest the Chief, who purchased thee ?
 Thou say'st he perish'd for the glory-sake
 Of Agamemnon. Name him ; I, perchance, 145
 May have beheld the Hero. None can say

² It may be proper to suggest that Ulysses was lord of part of the continent opposite to Ithaca ; viz., of the peninsula Nericus or Leuca, which afterward became an island, and is now called Santa Maura. F.

But Jove and the inhabitants of heaven
That I ne'er saw him, and may not impart
News of him ; I have roam'd through many a clime.

To whom the noble swineherd thus replied.

Alas, old man ! no traveller's tale of him
Will gain his consort's credence, or his son's ;
For wanderers, wanting entertainment, forge
Falsehoods for bread, and wilfully deceive.

No wanderer lands in Ithaca, but he seeks
With feign'd intelligence my mistress' ear ;
She welcomes all, and while she questions each
Minutely, from her lids lets fall the tear

Affectionate, as well beseems a wife

Whose mate hath perished in a distant land.

Thou could'st thyself, no doubt, my hoary friend !

(Would any furnish thee with decent vest

And mantle) fabricate a tale with ease ;

Yet sure it is that dogs and fowls, long since,

His skin have stript, or fishes of the Deep

Have eaten him, and on some distant shore

Whelm'd in deep sands his mouldering bones are laid.

So hath he perish'd ; whence to all his friends,

But chiefly to myself, sorrow of heart ;

For such another Lord, gentle as he,

Wherever sought, I have no hope to find,

Though I should wander even to the house

Of my own father. Neither yearns my heart

So feelingly (though that desiring too)

To see once more my parents and my home,

As to behold Ulysses yet again.

Ah stranger ! absent as he is, his name

Fills me with reverence, for he loved me much,

Cared for me much, and though we meet no more,

Holds still an elder brother's part in me.

Him answer'd then, the Hero toil-inured.

My friend ! since his return, in thy account,

Is an event impossible, and thy mind

Always incredulous that hope rejects,

I shall not slightly speak, but with an oath.—

Ulysses comes again ; and I demand

No more, than that the boon such news deserves,

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Be given me soon as he shall reach his home.
 Then give me vest and mantle fit for wear,
 Which, ere that hour, much as I need them both, 190
 I neither ask, nor will accept from thee.
 For him whom poverty can force aside
 From truth—I hate him as the gates of hell.
 Be Jove, of all in heaven, my witness first,
 Then, this thy hospitable board, and last, 195
 The household Gods of the illustrious Chief
 Himself, Ulysses, to whose gates I go,
 That all my words shall surely be fulfill'd.
 In this same year Ulysses shall arrive,
 Ere, this month closed, another month succeed, 200
 He shall return, and punish all who dare
 Insult his consort and his noble son.

To whom, Eumæus, thou didst thus reply.
 Old friend! that boon thou ne'er wilt earn from me ;
 Ulysses comes no more. But thou thy wine 205
 Drink quietly, and let us find, at length,
 Some other theme ; recall not this again
 To my remembrance, for my soul is grieved
 Oft as reminded of my honour'd Lord.
 Let the oath rest, and let Ulysses come 210
 Even as myself, and as Penelope,
 And as his ancient father, and his son
 Godlike Telemachus, all wish he may.
 Ay—there I feel again—nor cease to mourn
 His son Telemachus ; who, when the Gods 215
 Had given him growth like a young plant, and I
 Well hoped that nought inferior he should prove
 In person or in mind to his own sire,
 Hath lost, through influence human or divine,
 I know not how, his sober intellect, 220
 And after tidings of his sire is gone
 To far-famed Pylus ; his return, meantime,
 In ambush hidden the proud suitors wait,
 That the whole house may perish of renown'd
 Arcesias, named in Ithaca no more. 225
 But whether he have fallen or 'scaped, let him
 Rest also, whom Saturnian Jove protect !
 But come, my ancient guest ! now let me learn

Thy own afflictions ; answer me in truth.
 Who, and whence art thou ? in what city born ? 230
 Where dwell thy parents ? in what kind of ship
 Camest thou ? the mariners, why brought they thee
 To Ithaca ? and of what land are they ?
 For that on foot thou found'st us not, is sure.
 Him answer'd then Ulysses ever-wise. 235
 I will with truth resolve thee ; and if here
 Within thy cottage sitting, we had wine
 And food for many a day, and business none
 But to regale at ease while others toil'd,
 I could exhaust the year complete, my woes 240
 Rehearsing, nor at last, rehearse entire
 My sorrows by the will of heaven sustain'd.
 I boast me sprung from ancestry renown'd
 In spacious Crete ; son of a wealthy sire,
 Who other sons train'd numerous in his house, 245
 Born of his wedded wife : but he begat
 Me on his purchased concubine, whom yet
 Dear as his other sons in wedlock born
 Castor Hylacides esteem'd and loved,
 For him I boast my father. Him in Crete, 250
 While yet he lived, all reverenced as a God,
 So rich, so prosperous, and so blest was he
 With sons of highest praise. But death, the doom
 Of all, him bore to Pluto's drear abode,
 And his illustrious sons among themselves 255
 Portion'd his goods by lot ; to me, indeed,
 They gave a dwelling, and but little more ;
 Yet, for my virtuous qualities, I won
 A wealthy bride, for I was neither vain
 Nor base, forlorn as thou perceivest me now. 260
 But thou canst guess, I judge, viewing the straw
 What once was in the ear. Ah ! I have borne
 Much tribulation ; heap'd and heavy woes.
 Courage and phalanx-breaking might had I
 From Mars and Pallas ; at what time I drew 265
 (Planning some dread exploit) an ambush forth
 Of our most valiant Chiefs, no boding fears
 Of death seized *me*, but foremost far of all
 I sprang to fight, and pierced the flying foe.

Such was I once in arms. But household toils Sustain'd for children's sake, and carking cares To enrich a family, were not for me.	270
My pleasures were the gallant bark, the din Of battle, the smooth spear and glittering shaft, Objects of dread to others, but which me The Gods disposed to love and to enjoy.	275
Thus different minds are differently amused ; For ere Achaia's fleet had sail'd to Troy, Nine times was I commander of an host Embark'd against a foreign foe, and found	280
In all those enterprises great success.	
From the whole booty, first, what pleased me most Choosing, and sharing also much by lot I rapidly grew rich, and had thenceforth Among the Cretans reverence and respect.	285
But when loud-thundering Jove that voyage dire Ordain'd, which loosed the knees of many a Greek, Then to Idomeneus and me they gave The charge of all their fleet, which how to avoid	
We found not, so importunate the cry Of the whole host impell'd us to the task.	290
There fought we nine long years, and in the tenth (Priam's proud city pillaged) steer'd again Our galleys homeward, which the Gods dispersed.	
Then was it that deep-planning Jove devised For me much evil. One short month, no more, I gave to joys domestic, in my wife Happy, and in my babes, and in my wealth,	295
When the desire seized me with several ships Well-rigg'd, and furnish'd all with gallant crews,	
To sail for Egypt ; nine I fitted forth, To which stout mariners assembled fast.	300
Six days the chosen partners of my voyage Feasted, to whom I numerous victims gave For sacrifice, and for their own regale.	
Embarking on the seventh from spacious Crete, Before a clear breeze prosperous from the North We glided easily along, as down	305
A river's stream ; nor one of all my ships Damage incur'd, but healthy and at ease	310

We sat, while gales well-managed urged us on.
 The fifth day thence, smooth-flowing Nile we reach'd,
 And safe I moor'd in the Egyptian stream.
 Then, charging all my mariners to keep
 Strict watch for preservation of the ships,
 I order'd spies into the hill-tops ; but they
 Under the impulse of a spirit rash
 And hot for quarrel, the well-cultured fields
 Pillaged of the Egyptians, captive led
 Their wives and little ones, and slew the men. 315
 Soon was the city alarm'd, and at the cry
 Down came the citizens, by dawn of day,
 With horse and foot, and with the gleam of arms
 Filling the plain. Then Jove with panic dread
 Struck all my people ; none found courage more
 To stand, for mischief swarm'd on every side. 320
 There, numerous by the glittering spear we fell
 Slaughter'd, while others they conducted thence
 Alive to servitude. But Jove himself
 My bosom with this thought inspired, (I would
 That, dying, I had first fulfill'd my fate
 In Egypt, for new woes were yet to come !)
 Loosing my brazen casque, and slipping off
 My buckler, there I left them on the field,
 Then cast my spear away, and seeking, next,
 The chariot of the sovereign, clasp'd his knees,
 And kiss'd them. He, by my submission moved,
 Deliver'd me, and to his chariot-seat
 Raising, convey'd me weeping to his home
 With many an ashen spear his warriors sought
 To slay me, (for they now grew fiery-wroth)
 But he through fear of hospitable Jove,
 Chief punisher of wrong, saved me alive. 335
 Seven years I there abode, and much amass'd
 Among the Egyptians, gifted by them all ;
 But, in the eighth revolving year, arrived
 A shrewd Phoenician, in all fraud adept,
 Hungry, and who had numerous harm'd before,
 By whom I also was cajoled, and lured
 To attend him to Phoenicia, where his house
 And his possessions lay ; there I abode 340
 345
 350

A year complete his inmate ; but (the days
And months accomplish'd of the rolling year,
And the new seasons entering on their course)
To Libya then, on board his bark, by wiles
He won me with him, partner of the freight
Profess'd, but destined secretly to sale,
That he might profit largely by my price.
Not unsuspicious, yet constrain'd to go,
With this man I embark'd. A cloudless gale
Propitious blowing from the North, our ship
Ran right before it through the middle sea,
In the offing over Crete ; but adverse Jove
Destruction plann'd for them and death the while.
For, Crete now left afar, and other land
Appearing none, but sky alone and sea,
Right o'er the hollow bark Saturnian Jove
A cloud coerulean hung, darkening the Deep.
Then thundering oft, he hurl'd into the bark
His bolts ; she smitten by the fires of Jove,
Quaked all her length ; with sulphur fill'd she reek'd,
And o'er her sides precipitated, plunged
Like gulls the crew, forbidden by that stroke
Of wrath divine to hope their country more.
But Jove himself, when I had cast away
All hope of life, conducted to my arms
The strong tall mast, that I might yet escape.
Around that beam I clung, driving before
The stormy blast. Nine days complete I drove,
And on the tenth dark night, the rolling flood
Immense convey'd me to Thesprotia's shore.
There me the Hero Phidon, generous King
Of the Thesprotians, freely entertain'd ;
For his own son discovering me with toil
Exhausted and with cold, raised me, and thence
Led me humanely to his father's house,
Who cherish'd me, and gave me fresh attire.
There heard I of Ulysses, whom himself
Had entertain'd, he said, on his return
To his own land ; he shew'd me also gold,
Brass, and bright steel elaborate, whatsoe'er
Ulysses had amass'd, a store to feed

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A less illustrious family than his
 To the tenth generation, so immense
 His treasures in the royal palace lay.
 Himself, he said, was to Dodona gone,
 There, from the towering oaks of Jove to ask
 Counsel divine, if openly to land
 (After long absence) in his opulent realm
 Of Ithaca, be best, or in disguise.

395

To me the monarch swore, in his own hall
 Pouring libation that the ship was launch'd,
 And the crew ready for his conduct home.
 But me he first dismiss'd, for, as it chanced,
 A ship lay there of the Thesprotians, bound
 To green Dulichium's isle. He bade the crew
 Bear me to King Acastus with all speed ;
 But them far other thoughts pleased more, and thoughts
 Of harm to me, that I might yet be plunged
 In deeper gulfs of woe than I had known.

400

For when the billow-cleaving bark had left
 The land remote framing combined a plot
 Against my liberty, they stripp'd my vest
 And mantle, and this tatter'd raiment foul
 Gave me instead, which thy own eyes behold.

410

At even-tide reaching the cultured coast
 Of Ithaca, they left me bound on board
 With tackle of the bark, and quitting ship
 Themselves, made hasty supper on the shore.
 But me, meantime, the Gods easily loosed
 By their own power, when with this wrapper vile
 Around my brows, sliding into the sea
 At the ship's stern, I laid me on the flood.

420

With both hands oaring thence my course, I swam
 Till past all ken of theirs ; then landing where
 Thick covert of luxuriant trees I mark'd,
 Close couchant down I lay ; they muttering loud,
 Paced to and fro, but deeming farther search
 Unprofitable, soon embark'd again.

425

Thus baffling all their search with ease, the Gods
 Conceal'd and led me thence to the abode
 Of a wise man, dooming me still to live.
 To whom, Eumæus, thou didst thus reply.

430

Alas ! my most compassionate guest !
 Thou hast much moved me by this tale minute
 Of thy sad wanderings and thy numerous woes. 435
 But speaking of Ulysses, thou hast pass'd
 All credence ; I at least can give thee none.
 Why, noble as thou art, should'st thou invent
 Palpable falsehoods ? as for the return
 Of my regretted Lord, myself I know 440
 That had he not been hated by the Gods
 Unanimous, he had in battle died
 At Troy, or (that long doubtful war, at last,
 Concluded) in his people's arms at home. 445
 Then universal Greece had raised his tomb,
 And he had even for his son achieved
 Immortal glory ; but alas ! by beaks
 Of harpies torn, unseemly sight, he lies.
 Here is my home the while ; I never seek 450
 The city, unless summon'd by discreet
 Penelope to listen to the news
 Brought by some stranger, whencesoe'er arrived.
 Then, all, alike inquisitive, attend,
 Both who regret the absence of our King, 455
 And who rejoice gratuitous to gorge
 His property ; but as for me, no joy
 Find I in listening after such reports,
 Since an *Ætolian* cozen'd me, who found
 (After long wandering over various lands 460
 A fugitive for blood,) my lone retreat.
 Him warm I welcom'd and with open arms
 Received, who bold affirm'd that he had seen
 My master with Idomeneus in Crete
 His ships refitting shatter'd by a storm, 465
 And that in summer with his godlike band
 He would return, bringing great riches home,
 Or else in autumn. And thou ancient guest
 Forlorn ! since thee the Gods have hither led,
 Seek not to gratify me with untruths 470
 And to deceive me, since for no such cause
 I shall respect or love thee, but alone
 By pity influenced, and the fear of Jove.

To whom Ulysses, ever wise, replied.

Thou hast, in truth, a most incredulous mind,
Whom even with an oath I have not moved,
Or aught persuaded. Come then—let us make
In terms express a covenant, and the Gods
Who hold Olympus, witness to us both !
If thy own Lord at this thy house arrive,
Thou shalt dismiss me decently attired
In vest and mantle, that I may repair
Hence to Dulichium, whither I would go.
But if thy Lord come not, then, gathering all
Thy servants, headlong hurl me from a rock,
That other mendicants may fear to lie.

475

To whom the generous swine-herd in return.
Yes, stranger ! doubtless I should high renown
Obtain for virtue among men, both now
And in all future times, if, having first
Invited thee, and at my board regaled,
I next should slay thee ; then my prayers would mount,
Past question, swiftly to Saturnian Jove.
But the hour calls to supper, and, ere long,
The partners of my toils will come prepared
To spread the board with no unsavoury cheer.

490

Thus they conferr'd. And now the swains arrived,
Driving their charge, which fast they soon enclosed
Within their customary pens, and loud
The hubbub was of swine prison'd within.
Then call'd the master to his rustic train.
Bring ye the best, that we may set him forth
Before my friend from foreign climes arrived,
With whom ourselves will also feast, who find
The bright tusk'd multitude a painful charge,
While others, at no cost of theirs, consume,
Day after day, the profit of our toils.

500

So saying, his wood for fuel he prepared,
And, dragging thither a well-fatted brawn
Of the fifth year, his servants held him fast
At the hearth-side. Nor fail'd the master swain
To adore the Gods, (for wise and good was he,)
But consecration of the victim, first,
Himself performing, cast into the fire
The forehead bristles of the tusky boar,

505

510

515

Then pray'd to all above, that safe at length,
Ulysses might regain his native home.

Then lifting an huge shive that lay beside
The fire, he smote the boar, and dead he fell.

Next, piercing him, and scorching close his hair, 520
They carved him quickly, and Eumæus spread
Thin slices crude taken from every limb
O'er all his fat, then other slices cast,
Sprinkling them first with meal, into the fire.

The rest they slash'd and scored, and roasted well, 525
And placed it, heap'd together, on the board.

Then rose the good Eumæus to his task
Of distribution, for he understood
The hospitable entertainer's part.

Seven-fold partition of the banquet made, 530
He gave, with previous prayer, to Maia's³ son
And to the nymphs one portion of the whole,
Then served his present guests, honouring first
Ulysses with the boar's perpetual chine ;
By that distinction just his master's heart 535
He gratified, and thus the Hero spake.

Eumæus ! be thou as beloved of Jove
As thou art dear to me, whom, though attired
So coarsely, thou hast served with such respect !

To whom, Eumæus, thou didst thus reply. 540
Eat, noble stranger ! and refreshment take
Such as thou may'st ; God⁴ gives, and God denies
At His own will, for He is Lord of all.

He said, and to the everlasting Gods
The firstlings sacrificed of all, then made 545
Libation, and the cup placed in the hands
Of city-spoiler Laertiades
Sitting beside his own allotted share.

³ Mercury.

⁴ Θεος—without a relative, and consequently signifying God in the abstract, is not unfrequently found in Homer; though, fearing to give offence to serious minds unacquainted with the original, I have not always given it that force in the translation. But here the sentiment is such as fixes the sense intended by the author with a precision that leaves me no option. It is observable too, that ὀνυματι γαρ απαντα is an inscription of power such as the poet never makes to his Jupiter.

Meantime, Mesalius bread dispensed to all,
Whom in the absence of his Lord, himself
Eumæus had from Taphian traders bought
With his own proper goods, at no expense
Either to old Laertes or the Queen.

550

And now, all stretch'd their hands toward the feast
Reeking before them, and when hunger none
Felt more or thirst, Mesalius clear'd the board.

555

Then, fed to full satiety, in haste
Each sought his couch. Black came a moonless night,
And Jove all night descended fast in showers,
With howlings of the ever-watery West.

560

Ulysses, at that sound, for trial's sake
Of his good host, if putting off his cloak
He would accommodate him, or require
That service for him at some other hand,
Addressing thus the family began.

565

Hear now, Eumæus, and ye other swains
His fellow-labourers ! I shall somewhat boast,
By wine befool'd, which forces even the wise
To carol loud, to titter and to dance,
And words to utter, oft better suppress'd.

570

But since I have begun, I shall proceed,
Prating my fill. Ah, might those days return
With all the youth and strength that I enjoy'd,
When in close ambush, once, at Troy we lay !

Ulysses, Menelaus, and myself
Their chosen coadjutor, led the band.

575

Approaching to the city's lofty wall
Through the thick bushes and the reeds that gird
The bulwarks, down we lay flat in the marsh,
Under our arms. Then, Boreas blowing loud,
A rueful night came on, frosty and charged

580

With snow that blanched us thick as morning rime,
And every shield with ice was crystall'd o'er.

The rest with cloaks and vests well cover'd, slept

585

Beneath their bucklers ; I alone my cloak,

Improvident, had left behind, no thought

Conceiving of a season so severe ;

Shield and belt, therefore, and nought else had I.

The night, at length, nigh spent, and all the stars

Declining in their course, with elbow thrust
Against Ulysses' side I roused the Chief,
And thus address'd him ever prompt to hear.

590

Laertes' noble son, for wiles renown'd !

I freeze to death. Help me, or I am lost.

No cloak have I ; some evil demon, sure,
Beguil'd me of all prudence, that I came
Thus sparingly clad ; I shall, I must expire.

595

So I ; he, ready as he was in arms
And counsel both, the remedy at once
Devised, and thus, low-whispering, answered me.

600

Hush ! lest perchance some other hear—He said,
And leaning on his elbow, spake aloud.

My friends ! all hear—a monitory dream
Hath reached me, for we lie far from the ships.
Haste, therefore, one of you, with my request
To Agamemnon, Atreus' son, our Chief,
That he would reinforce us from the camp.

605

He spake, and at the word, Andraemon's son
Thoas arose, who, casting off his cloak,
Ran thence toward the ships, and folded warm
Within it, there lay I till dawn appear'd.
Oh for the vigour of such youth again !
Then, some good peasant here, either for love
Or for respect, would cloak a man like me,
Whom, now, thus sordid in attire ye scorn.

615

To whom, Eumeus, thou didst thus reply.

My ancient guest ! I cannot but approve
Thy narrative, nor hast thou uttered aught
Unseemly, or that needs excuse. No want
Of raiment, therefore, or of aught beside
Needful to solace penury like thine,
Shall harm thee here ; yet at the peep of dawn
Gird thy own tatters to thy loins again ;
For we have no great store of cloaks to boast,
Or change of vests, but, singly, one for each.

620

But when Ulysses' son shall once arrive,
He will himself with vest and mantle both
Clothe thee, and send thee whither most thou would'st.

625

So saying, he rose, and nearer made his couch
To the hearth-side, spreading it thick with skins

630

Of sheep and goats ; then lay the Hero down,
O'er whom a shaggy mantle large he threw,
Which oft-times served him with a change, when rough
The winter's blast and terrible arose.

So was Ulysses bedded, and the youths
Slept all beside him ; but the master-swain
Chose not his place of rest so far remote
From his rude charge, but to the outer court
With his nocturnal furniture repair'd,
Gladdening Ulysses' heart that one so true
In his own absence kept his rural stores.

Athwart his sturdy shoulders first he slung
His faulchion keen, then wrapp'd him in a cloak
Thick woven, winter proof ; he lifted, next,
The skin of a well-thriven goat, in bulk
Surpassing others, and his javelin took
Sharp-pointed, with which dogs he drove and men.
Thus arm'd, he sought his wonted couch beneath
A hollow rock where the herd slept, secure
From the sharp current of the Northern blast.

635

640

645

650

BOOK XV.

ARGUMENT.

Telemachus, admonished by Minerva, takes leave of Menelaus, but ere he sails, is accosted by Theoclymenus, a prophet of Argos, whom at his earnest request he takes on board. In the meantime Eumæus relates to Ulysses the means by which he came to Ithaca. Telemachus arriving there, gives orders for the return of his bark to the city, and repairs himself to Eumæus.

MEANTIME to Lacedæmon's spacious vale
 Minerva went, that she might summon thence
 Ulysses' glorious son to his own home.
 Arrived, she found Telemachus reposed
 And Nestor's son beneath the vestibule
 Of Menelaus, mighty Chief; she saw
 Pisistratus in bands of gentle sleep
 Fast bound, but not Telemachus; his mind
 No rest enjoy'd, by filial cares disturb'd
 Amid the silent night, when drawing near
 To his couch side, the Goddess thus began.
 Thou canst no longer prudently remain
 A wanderer here, Telemachus! thy home
 Abandon'd, and those haughty suitors left
 Within thy walls; fear lest, partition made
 Of thy possessions, they devour the whole,
 And in the end thy voyage bootless prove
 Delay not; from brave Menelaus ask
 Dismission hence, that thou may'st find at home
 Thy spotless mother, whom her brethren urge
 And her own father even now to wed
 Eurymachus, in gifts and in amount
 Of proffer'd dower superior to them all.
 Some treasure, else, shall haply from thy house
 Be taken, such as thou wilt grudge to spare.
 For well thou know'st how woman is disposed;

5

10

15

20

25

Her whole anxiety is to increase
 His substance whom she weds ; no care hath she
 Of her first children, or remembers more
 The buried husband of her virgin choice. 30

Returning, then, to her of all thy train
 Whom thou shalt most approve, the charge commit
 Of thy concerns domestic, till the Gods
 Themselves shall guide thee to a noble wife. 35

Hear also this, and mark it. In the frith
 Samos the rude, and Ithaca between,
 The chief of all her suitors thy return
 In vigilant ambush wait, with strong desire
 To slay thee, ere thou reach thy native shore,
 But shall not, as I judge, till the earth hide 40

Many a lewd reveller at thy expense.
 Yet steer thy galley from those isles afar,
 And voyage make by night ; some guardian God
 Shall save thee, and shall send thee prosperous gales.
 Then, soon as thou attain'st the nearest shore 45

Of Ithaca, dispatching to the town
 Thy bark with all thy people, seek at once
 The swine-herd ; for Eumæus is thy friend.
 There sleep, and send him forth into the town
 With tidings to Penelope, that safe 50

Thou art restored from Pylus home again.

She said, and sought the Olympian heights sublime.
 Then, with his heel shaking him, he awoke
 The son of Nestor, whom he thus address'd.

Rise, Nestor's son, Pisistratus ! lead forth 55

The steeds, and yoke them. We must now depart.

To whom the son of Nestor thus replied.
 Telemachus ! what haste soe'er we feel,
 We can by no means prudently attempt
 To drive by night, and soon it will be dawn.
 Stay, therefore, till the Hero, Atreus' son, 60

Spear-practised Menelaus shall his gifts
 Place in the chariot, and with kind farewell
 Dismiss thee ; for the guest in memory holds
 Through life, the host who treats him as a friend. 65

Scarce had he spoken, when the golden dawn
 Appearing, Menelaus, from the side

Of beauteous Helen risen, their bed approach'd,
 Whose coming when Telemachus perceived,
 Clothing himself hastily in his vest
 Magnificent, and o'er his shoulders broad
 Casting his graceful mantle, at the door
 He met the Hero, whom he thus address'd.

Atrides Menelaus, Chief renown'd !

Dismiss me hence to Ithaca again,
 My native isle, for I desire to go.

Him answer'd Menelaus famed in arms.

Telemachus ! I will not long delay
 Thy wish'd return. I disapprove alike

The host whose assiduity extreme

80

Distresses, and whose negligence offends ;

The middle course is best ; alike we err,
 Him thrusting forth whose wish is to remain,
 And hindering the impatient to depart.

This only is true kindness—To regale

85

The present guest and speed him when he would.

Yet stay, till thou shalt see my splendid gifts
 Placed in thy chariot, and till I command

My women from our present stores to spread

90

The table with a plentiful repast.

For both the honour of the guest demands,
 And his convenience also, that he eat

Sufficient, entering on a length of road.

But if through Hellas thou wilt take thy way

95

And traverse Argos, I will then myself

Attend thee ; thou shalt journey with my steeds

Beneath thy yoke, and I will be thy guide

To many a city, whence we shall not go

Ungratified, but shall in each receive

Some gift at least, tripod, or charger bright,

100

Or golden chalice, or a pair of mules.

To whom Telemachus, discreet, replied.

Atrides Menelaus, Chief renown'd !

I would at once depart, (for guardian none

Of my possessions have I left behind,)

105

Lest, while I seek my father, I be lost

Myself, or lose what I should grudge to spare.

Which when the valiant Menelaus heard,

He bade his spouse and maidens spread the board
At once with remnants of the last regale.

110

Then Eteoneus came, Boetheus' son
Newly arisen, for nigh at hand he dwelt,
Whom Menelaus bade kindle the fire

By which to dress their food, and he obey'd.
He, next, himself his fragrant chamber sought,

115

Not sole, but by his spouse and by his son
Attended, Megapenthes. There arrived

Where all his treasures lay, Atrides, first,
Took forth, himself, a goblet, then consign'd

120

To his son's hand an argent beaker bright.

Meantime, beside her coffers Helen stood
Where lay her variegated robes, fair works

Of her own hand. Producing one, in size

And in magnificence the chief, a star

125

For splendour, and the lowest place of all,

Loveliest of her sex, she bore it thence.

Then, all proceeding through the house, they sought
Telemachus again, whom reaching, thus
The Hero of the golden locks began.

May Jove the Thunderer, dread Juno's mate,
Grant thee, Telemachus, such voyage home
As thy own heart desires! accept from all
My stores selected as the richest far

130

And noblest gift for finish'd beauty—This.

I give thee wrought elaborate a cup,
Itself all silver, bound with lip of gold.

135

It is the work of Vulcan, which to me
The Hero Phædimus imparted, King
Of the Sidonians, when on my return,
Beneath his roof I lodged. I make it thine.

140

So saying, the Hero, Atreus' son, the cup
Placed in his hands, and Megapenthes set
Before him, next, the argent beaker bright;
But lovely Helen drawing nigh, the robe
Presented to him, whom she thus address'd.

145

I also give thee, oh my son, a gift,
Which seeing, thou shalt think on her whose hands
Wrought it; a present on thy nuptial day
For thy fair spouse; meantime, repose it safe

In thy own mother's keeping. Now, farewell !
Prosperous and happy be thy voyage home !

She ceased, and gave it to him, who the gift
Accepted glad, and in the chariot-chest
Pisistratus the Hero all disposed,

Admiring them the while. They, following, next,
The Hero Menelaus to his hall
Each on his couch or on his throne reposed.

A maiden, then, with golden ewer charged
And silver bowl, pour'd water on their hands,
And spread the polish'd table, which with food
Various, selected from her present stores,
The mistress of the household charge supplied.
Boetheus' son stood carver, and to each
His portion gave, while Megapenthes, son
Of glorious Menelaus, served the cup.

Then, all with outstretch'd hands the feast assail'd,
And when nor hunger more nor thirst of wine
They felt, Telemachus and Nestor's son
Yoked the swift steeds, and, taking each his seat
In the resplendent chariot, drove at once
Right through the sounding portico abroad.

But Menelaus, Hero amber-hair'd,
A golden cup bearing with richest wine
Replete in his right hand, follow'd them forth,
That not without libation first perform'd
They might depart ; he stood before the steeds,
And drinking first, thus, courteous, them bespake.

Health to you both, young friends ! and from my lips
Like greeting bear to Nestor, royal Chief,
For he was ever as a father kind
To me, while the Achaians warr'd at Troy.

To whom Telemachus discreet replied.
And doubtless, so we will ; at our return
We will report to him, illustrious Prince !
Thy every word. And oh, I would to heaven
That reaching Ithaca, I might at home
Ulysses hail as sure, as I shall hence
Depart, with all benevolence by thee
Treated, and rich in many a noble gift.

While thus he spake, on his right hand appear'd

An eagle ; in his talons pounced he bore
 A white-plumed goose domestic, newly taken
 From the house court. Ran females all and males
 Clamorous after him ; but he the steeds
 Approaching on the right, sprang into air.
 That sight rejoicing and with hearts revived
 They view'd, and thus Pisistratus his speech
 Amid them all to Menelaus turn'd.

195

Now, Menelaus, think, illustrious Chief !
 If us, this omen, or thyself regard.

200

While warlike Menelaus musing stood
 What answer fit to frame, Helen meantime,
 His spouse long-stoled preventing him, began.

Hear me ; for I will answer as the Gods
 Teach me, and as I think shall come to pass.
 As he, descending from his place of birth
 The mountains, caught our pamper'd goose away,
 So shall Ulysses, after many woes
 And wanderings, to his home restored, avenge
 His wrongs, or even now is at his home
 For all those suitors sowing seeds of woe.

205

To whom Telemachus, discreet, replied.
 Oh grant it Jove, Juno's high-thundering mate !
 So will I, there arrived, with vow and prayer
 Thee worship, as thou wert thyself divine.

215

He said, and lash'd the coursers ; fiery they
 And fleet, sprang through the city to the plain.
 All day the yoke on either side they shook,
 Journeying swift ; and now the setting sun
 To gloomy evening had resign'd the roads, .

220

When they to Pheræ came, and in the house
 Of good Diocles slept, their liberal host,
 Whose sire Orsilochus from Alpheus sprang.

But when Aurora, daughter of the Dawn,
 Look'd rosy from the East, yoking their steeds,
 They in the sumptuous chariot sat again.

225

Forth through the vestibule they drove, and through
 The sounding portico, when Nestor's son
 Plied brisk the scourge, and willing flew the steeds.
 Thus whirl'd along, soon they approach'd the gate
 Of Pylus, when Telemachus, his speech

230

Turning to his companion, thus began.

How, son of Nestor! shall I win from thee
Not promise only, but performance kind
Of my request? we are not bound alone
To friendship by the friendship of our sires,
But by equality of years, and this
Our journey shall unite us still the more.
Bear me not, I entreat thee, noble friend!
Beyond the ship, but drop me at her side,
Lest ancient Nestor, though against my will,
Detain me in his palace through desire
To feast me, for I dread the least delay.

He spake; then mused Pisistratus how best
He might effect the wishes of his friend,
And thus at length resolved; turning his steeds
With sudden deviation to the shore,
He sought the bark, and placing in the stern
Both gold and raiment, the illustrious gifts
Of Menelaus, thus, in accents wing'd
With ardour, urged Telemachus away.

Dispatch, embark, summon thy crew on board,
Ere my arrival notice give of thine
To the old King; for vehement I know
His temper, neither will he let thee hence,
But, hasting hither, will himself enforce
Thy longer stay, that thou may'st not depart
Ungifted; nought will fire his anger more.

So saying, he to the Pylian city urged
His steeds bright-maned, and at the palace-gate
Arrived of Nestor speedily; meantime
Telemachus exhorted thus his crew.

My gallant friends! set all your tackle, climb
The sable bark, for I would now return.

He spake; they heard him gladly, and at once
All fill'd the benches. While his voyage he
Thus expedited, and beside the stern
To Pallas sacrifice perform'd and pray'd,
A stranger, born remote, who had escaped
From Argos' fugitive for blood, a seer,
And of Melampus' progeny approach'd.
Melampus, in old time, in Pylus dwelt,

235

240

245

250

255

260

265

270

Mother of flocks, alike for wealth renown'd
And the magnificence of his abode.

He, flying from the far-famed Pylian King, 275
The mighty Neleus, migrated at length

Into another land, whose wealth, the while,
Neleus by force possess'd a year complete.

Meantime, Melampus in the house endured
Of Phylacus¹ imprisonment and woe,

And burn'd with wrath for Neleus' daughter sake
By fell Erynnis kindled in his heart.

But 'scaping death, he drove the lowing beeves
From Phylace to Pylus, well avenged

His numerous injuries at Neleus' hands

Sustain'd, and gave into his brother's arms

King Neleus' daughter fair, the promised bride.

To Argos steed-renown'd he journey'd next,

There destined to inhabit and to rule

Multitudes of Achaians. In that land

He married, built a palace, and became

Father of two brave sons, Antiphates

And Mantius ; to Antiphates was born

The brave Oicleus ; from Oicleus sprang

Amphiaraus, demagogue renown'd,

Whom with all tenderness, and as a friend,

Alike the Thunderer and Apollo prized ;

Yet reach'd he not the bounds of hoary age,

But by his mercenary consort's arts

Persuaded,² met his destiny at Thebes.

He 'gat Alcmæon and Amphilochus.

Mantius was also father of two sons,

Clytus and Polyphides. Clytus pass'd

From earth to heaven, and dwells among the Gods,

¹ Iphyclus, the son of Phylacus, had seized and detained cattle belonging to Neleus ; Neleus ordered his nephew Melampus to recover them, and as security for his obedience seized on a considerable part of his possessions. Melampus attempted the service, failed, and was cast into prison ; but at length escaping, accomplished his errand, vanquished Neleus in battle, and carried off his daughter Pero, whom Neleus had promised to the brother of Melampus, but had afterward refused her.

² His wife Eryphyle, bribed by Polynices, persuaded him, though aware that death awaited him in that city, to go to Thebes, where he fell accordingly.

Stolen by Aurora for his beauty's sake. 305
 But (brave Amphiaraüs once deceased)
 Phœbus exalted Polyphides far
 Above all others in the prophet's part.
 He, anger'd by his father, roam'd away
 To Hyperesia, where he dwelt renown'd
 Throughout all lands the oracle of all.

His son, named Theoclymenus, was he
 Who now approach'd ; he found Telemachus
 Libation offering in his bark, and prayer,
 And in wing'd accents ardent him address'd. 310

Ah, friend ! since sacrificing in this place
 I find thee, by these sacred rites and those
 Whom thou ador'st, and by thy own dear life,
 And by the lives of these thy mariners
 I beg true answer ; hide not what I ask. 320
 Who art thou ? whence ? where born ? and sprung from whom ?

To whom Telemachus, discreet, replied.
 I will inform thee, stranger ! and will solve
 Thy questions with much truth. I am by birth
 Ithacan, and Ulysses was my sire. 325
 But he hath perish'd by a woful death,
 And I, believing it, with these have plough'd
 The Ocean hither, interested to learn
 A father's fate long absent from his home.

Then answer'd godlike Theoclymenus. 330
 I also am a wanderer, having slain
 A man of my own tribe ; brethren and friends
 Numerous had he in Argos steed-renown'd,
 And powerful are the Achaians dwelling there.
 From them, through terror of impending death, 335
 I fly, a banish'd man henceforth for ever.
 Ah, save a suppliant fugitive ! lest death
 O'ertake me, for I doubt not their pursuit.

Whom thus Telemachus answer'd discreet.
 I shall not, be assured, since thou desirest
 To join me, chase thee from my bark away.
 Follow me, therefore, and with us partake,
 In Ithaca, what best the land affords.

So saying, he at the stranger's hand received
 His spear, which on the deck he laid, then climb'd

Himself the bark, and seated in the stern,
At his own side placed Theoclymenus.

They cast the hawsers loose ; then with loud voice
Telemachus exhorted all to hand

The tackle, whom his sailors prompt obey'd.

350

The tall mast heaving, in its socket deep

They lodged it, and its cordage braced secure,

Then, straining at the halyards, hoised the sail.

Fair wind, and blowing fresh through aether pure

Minerva sent them, that the bark might run

355

Her nimblest course through all the briny way.

Now sank the sun, and dusky evening dimm'd

The waves, when, driven by propitious Jove,

His bark stood right for Pheræ ; thence she stretch'd

360

To sacred Elis, where the Epeans rule,

And through the sharp Echinades he next

Steer'd her uncertain whether fate ordain'd

His life or death, surprisal or escape.

Meantime Ulysses and the swineherd ate
Their cottage-mess, and the assistant swains
Theirs also ; and when hunger now and thirst
Had ceas'd in all, Ulysses thus began,
Proving the swineherd, whether friendly still,

365

And anxious for his good, he would entreat
His stay, or thence hasten him to the town.

370

Eumæus, and all ye his servants, hear !

It is my purpose, lest I wear thee out,

Thee and thy friends, to seek at early dawn

The city, there to beg :—but give me first

Needful instructions, and a trusty guide

375

Who may conduct me thither ; there my task

Must be to roam the streets ; some hand humane

Perchance shall give me a small pittance there,

A little bread, and a few drops to drink.

Ulysses' palace I shall also seek,

380

And to discreet Penelope report

My tidings ; neither shall I fail to mix

With those imperious suitors, who, themselves

Full-fed, may spare perhaps some boon to me.

Me shall they find, in whatsoe'er they wish

385

Their ready servitor, for (understand

And mark me well,) the herald of the skies,
Hermes, from whom all actions of mankind
Their grace receive and polish, is my friend ;
So that in menial offices I fear

390

No rival, whether I be call'd to heap
The hearth with fuel, or dry wood to cleave,
To roast, to carve, or to distribute wine,
As oft the poor are wont who serve the great.

To whom, Eumæus ! at those words displeased,
Thou didst reply. Gods ! how could such a thought
Possess thee, stranger ? surely thy resolve

395

Is altogether fix'd to perish there,
If thou indeed hast purposed with that throng

400

To mix, whose riot and outrageous acts
Of violence echo through the vault of heaven.

None, such as thou, serve *them* ; their servitors
Are youths well-cloak'd, well-vested ; sleek their heads,
And smug their countenances ; such alone

Are their attendants, and the polish'd boards
Groan overcharged with bread, with flesh, with wine.

Rest here content ; for neither me nor these
Thou weariest aught, and when Ulysses' son
Shall come, he will with vest and mantle fair
Clothe thee, and send thee whither most thou would'st.

To whom, Ulysses, Hero toil-inured.

I wish thee, O Eumæus ! dear to Jove
As thou art dear to me, for this reprieve
Vouchsafed me kind, from wandering and from woe !

No worse condition is of mortal man
Than his who wanders ; for the poor man, driven

By woe and by misfortune homeless forth,
A thousand miseries, day by day, endures.

Since thou detain'st me then, and bidd'st me wait
His coming, tell me if the father still

Of famed Ulysses live, whom, going hence,
He left so nearly on the verge of life ?

And lives his mother ? or have both deceased
Already, and descended to the shades ?

To whom the master swineherd thus replied.

I will inform thee, and with strictest truth,
Of all that thou hast ask'd. Laertes lives,

420

425

But supplication offering to the Gods
 Ceaseless, to free him from a weary life,
 So deeply his long-absent son he mourns,
 And the dear consort of his early youth,
 Whose death is his chief sorrow, and hath brought
 Old age on him, or ere its date arrived.

430

She died of sorrow for her glorious son,
 And died deplorably³; may never friend
 Of mine, or benefactor die as she!

435

While yet she lived, dejected as she was,
 I found it yet some solace to converse
 With her, who rear'd me in my childish days,
 Together with her lovely youngest-born
 The Princess Ctimena; for side by side
 We grew, and I scarce honour'd less than she.

440

But soon as our delightful prime we both
 Attain'd, to Samos her they sent, a bride,
 And were requited with rich dower; but me
 Clothed handsomely with tunic and with vest,
 And with fair sandals furnish'd, to the field
 She ordered forth, yet loved me still the more.
 I miss her kindness now; but gracious heaven
 Prospers the work on which I here attend;

450

Hence have I food, and hence I drink, and hence
 Refresh sometimes a worthy guest like thee.

But kindness none experience I, or can,
 From fair Penelope (my mistress now)

455

In word or action, so is the house cursed

With that lewd throng. Glad would the servants be
 Might they approach their mistress, and receive
 Advice from her; glad too to eat and drink,
 And somewhat bear each to his rural home,
 For perquisites are every servant's joy.

460

Then answer thus, Ulysses wise return'd.

Alas! good swain, Eumæus, how remote
 From friends and country wast thou forced to roam
 Even in thy infancy! But tell me true.

The city where thy parents dwelt, did foes
 Pillage it? or did else some hostile band
 Surprising thee alone, on herd or flock

465

³ She is said to have hanged herself.

Attendant, bear thee with them o'er the Deep,
And sell thee at this Hero's house, who paid
Doubtless for *thee* no sordid price or small ? 470

To whom the master swineherd in reply.
Stranger ! since thou art curious to be told
My story, silent listen, and thy wine
At leisure quaff. The nights are longest now,
And such as time for sleep afford, and time 475
For pleasant conference ; neither were it good
That thou should'st to thy couch before thy hour,
Since even sleep is hurtful, in excess.

Whoever here is weary, and desires
Early repose, let him depart to rest, 480
And at the peep of day, when he hath fed
Sufficiently, drive forth my master's herd ;
But we with wine and a well-furnish'd board
Supplied, will solace mutually derive
From recollection of our sufferings past ; 485
For who hath much endured, and wander'd far,
Finds the recital even of sorrow sweet.
Now hear thy question satisfied ; attend !
There is an island (thou hast heard, perchance,
Of such an isle,) named Syria⁴ ; it is placed 490
Above Ortygia, and a dial owns
True to the tropic changes of the year.⁵
No great extent she boasts, yet is she rich
In cattle and in flocks, in wheat and wine.
No famine knows that people, or disease 495
Noisome of all that elsewhere seize the race
Of miserable man ; but when old age
Steals on the citizens, Apollo, arm'd
With silver bow and bright Diana come,
Whose gentle shafts dismiss them soon to rest. 500
Two cities share between them all the isle,

⁴ Not improbably the isthmus of Syracuse, an island, perhaps, or peninsula at that period, or at least imagined to be such by Homer. The birth of Diana gave fame to Ortygia. F.

⁵ "Οθι τροπαι ηελιοιο.—The Translator has rendered the passage according to that interpretation of it to which several of the best expositors incline. Nothing can be so absurd as to suppose that Homer, so correct in his geography, could mean to place a Mediterranean island under the Tropic.

And both were subject to my father's sway,
Ctesias Ormenides, a godlike Chief.
It chanced that from Phœnacia, famed for skill
In arts marine, a vessel thither came
By sharpers mann'd, and laden deep with toys.
Now, in my father's family abode
A fair Phœnician, tall, full-sized, and skill'd
In works of elegance, whom they beguiled.
While she wash'd linen on the beach, beside
The ship, a certain mariner of those
Seduced her ; for all women, even the wise
And sober, feeble prove by love assail'd.
Who was she, he enquired, and whence ? nor she
Scrupled to tell at once her father's home.

505

510

515

I am of Sidon,⁶ famous for her works
In brass and steel ; daughter of Arybas,
Who rolls in affluence ; Taphian pirates thence
Stole me returning from the field, from whom
This Chief procured me at no little cost.

520

Then answer thus her paramour return'd.
Wilt thou not hence to Sidon in our ship,
That thou may'st once more visit the abode
Of thy own wealthy parents, and themselves ?
For still they live, and still are wealthy deem'd.

525

To whom the woman. Even that might be,
Would ye, ye seamen, by a solemn oath
Assure me of a safe conveyance home.

Then sware the mariners as she required,
And, when their oath was ended, thus again
The woman of Phœnacia them bespake.

530

Now, silence ! no man henceforth of you all
Accost me, though he meet me on the road,
Or at yon fountain ; lest some tattler run
With tidings home to my old master's ear,
Who, with suspicion touch'd, may *me* confine
In cruel bonds, and death contrive for *you*.
But be ye close ; purchase your stores in haste ;
And when your vessel shall be freighted full,
Quick send me notice ; for I mean to bring
What gold soever opportune I find,

535

540

⁶ A principal city of Phœnacia.

And will my passage cheerfully defray
With still another moveable. I nurse
The good man's son, an urchin shrewd, of age
To scamper at my side; him will I bring, 545
Whom at some foreign market ye shall prove
Saleable at what price soe'er ye will.

So saying, she to my father's house return'd.
They, there abiding the whole year, their ship
With purchased goods freighted of every kind,
And when her lading now complete, she lay 550
For sea prepared, their messenger arrived
To summon down the woman to the shore.
A mariner of theirs, subtle and shrewd,
Then, entering at my father's gate, produced 555
A splendid collar, gold with amber strung.
My mother (then at home) with all her maids
Handling and gazing on it with delight,
Proposed to purchase it, and he the nod
Significant, gave unobserved, the while, 560
To the Phœnician woman, and return'd.
She, thus inform'd, leading me by the hand
Went forth, and finding in the vestibule
The cups and tables which my father's guests
Had used, (but they were to the forum gone 565
For converse with their friends assembled there,)
Convey'd three cups into her bosom-folds,
And bore them off, whom I a thoughtless child
Accompanied, at the decline of day,
When dusky evening had embrown'd the shore. 570
We, stepping nimbly on, soon reach'd the port
Renown'd, where that Phœnician vessel lay.
They shipp'd us both, and all embarking cleaved
Their liquid road by favourable gales,
Jove's gift, impell'd. Six days we day and night 575
Continual sail'd, but when Saturnian Jove
Now bade the seventh bright morn illume the skies,
Then shaft-arm'd Dian struck the woman dead.
At once she pitch'd headlong into the bilge
Like a sea-coot, whence heaving her again, 580
The seamen gave her to be fishes' food,
And I survived to mourn her. But the winds

And rolling billows them bore to the coast
Of Ithaca, where with his proper goods
Laertes bought me. By such means it chanced
That e'er I saw the isle in which I dwell.

585

To whom Ulysses, glorious Chief replied.
Eumæus ! thou hast moved me much, thy woes
Enumerating thus at large. But Jove
Hath neighbour'd all thy evil with this good, 590
That after numerous sorrows thou hast reach'd
The house of a kind master, at whose hands
Thy sustenance is sure, and here thou lead'st
A tranquil life; but I have late arrived,
City after city of the world explored.

595

Thus mutual they conferr'd, nor leisure found
Save for short sleep, by morning soon surprised.
Meantime the comrades of Telemachus
Approaching land, cast loose the sail, and lower'd
Alert the mast, then oar'd the vessel in. 600
The anchors heaved aground,⁷ and hawsers tied
Secure, themselves, forth-issuing on the shore,
Breakfast prepared, and charged their cups with wine.
When neither hunger now, nor thirst remain'd
Unsatisfied, Telemachus began.

605

Push ye the sable bark without delay
Home to the city. I will to the field
Among my shepherds, and (my rural works
Survey'd) at eve will to the town return.
To-morrow will I set before you wine 610
And plenteous viands, wages of your toil.

610

To whom the godlike Theoclymenus.
Whither must I, my son ? who, of the Chiefs
Of rugged Ithaca, shall harbour me ?
Shall I to thine and to thy mother's house ?

615

Then thus Telemachus, discreet, replied.
I would invite thee to proceed at once
To our abode, since nought should fail thee there
Of kind reception, but it were a course
Now not advisable ; for I must myself 620
Be absent, neither would my mother's eyes
Behold thee, so unfrequent she appears

620

⁷ The anchors were lodged on the shore, not plunged as ours.

Before the suitors, shunning whom, she sits
Weaving continual at the palace-top.

But I will name to thee another Chief 625

Whom thou mays't seek, Eurymachus, the son
Renown'd of prudent Polybus, whom all
The people here reverence as a God.

Far noblest of them all is he, and seeks 630

More ardent than his rivals far, to wed
My mother, and to fill my father's throne.

But He who dwells above, Jove only knows
If some disastrous day be not ordain'd
For them, or ere those nuptials shall arrive.

While thus he spake, at his right hand appear'd, 635

Messenger of Apollo, on full wing,

A falcon ; in his pounces clench'd he bore
A dove, which rending, down he pour'd her plumes
Between the galley and Telemachus.

Then calling him apart the prophet lock'd 640

His hand in his, and thus explain'd the sign.

Not undirected by the Gods his flight
On our right hand, Telemachus ! this hawk
Hath wing'd propitious ; soon as I perceived

I knew him ominous.—In all the isle 645

No family of a more royal note

Than yours is found, and yours shall still prevail.

Whom thus Telemachus answer'd discreet.

Grant heaven, my guest ! that this good word of thine

Fail not, and soon thou shalt such bounty share 650

And friendship at my hands, that at first sight,

Whoe'er shall meet thee shall pronounce thee blest.

Then, to Piræus thus, his friend approved.

Piræus, son of Clytius ! (for of all

My followers to the shore of Pylus, none

More prompt than thou hath my desires perform'd,)

Now also to thy own abode conduct

This stranger, whom with hospitable care

Cherish and honour till myself arrive.

To whom Piræus answer'd, spear-renown'd. 660

Telemachus ! however long thy stay,

Punctual I will attend him, and no want

Of hospitality shall he find with me.

So saying, he climbed the ship, then bade the crew
Embarking also, cast the hawsers loose,

665

And each obedient to his bench repaired.

Meantime Telemachus his sandals bound,

And lifted from the deck his glittering spear.

Then as Telemachus had bidden them,

Son of divine Ulysses, casting loose

670

The hawsers, forth they push'd into the Deep

And sought the city ; while with nimble pace

Proceeding thence, Telemachus attain'd

The cottage soon where good Eumæus slept,

The swine-herd, faithful to his numerous charge.

675

BOOK XVI.

A R G U M E N T.

Telemachus dispatches Eumæus to the city to inform Penelope of his safe return from Pylus ; during his absence, Ulysses makes himself known to his son. The suitors, having watched for Telemachus in vain, arrive again at Ithaca.

It was the hour of dawn, when in the cot
Kindling fresh fire, Ulysses and his friend
Noble Eumæus dress'd their morning fare,
And sent the herdsmen with the swine abroad.
Seeing Telemachus, the watchful dogs 5
Bark'd not, but fawn'd around him. At that sight,
And at the sound of feet which now approach'd,
Ulysses in wing'd accents thus remark'd.
Eumæus ! certain, either friend of thine
Is nigh at hand, or one whom well thou know'st ; 10
Thy dogs bark not, but fawn on his approach
Obsequious, and the sound of feet I hear.
Scarce had he ceased, when his own son himself.
Stood in the vestibule. Upsprang at once
Eumæus wonder-struck, and from his hand 15
Let fall the cups with which he was employ'd
Mingling rich wine ; to his young Lord he ran,
His forehead kiss'd, kiss'd his bright-beaming eyes
And both his hands, weeping profuse the while.
As when a father holds in his embrace, 20
Arrived from foreign lands in the tenth year,
His darling son, the offspring of his age,
His only one, for whom he long hath mourn'd,
So kiss'd the noble peasant o'er and o'er
Godlike Telemachus, as from death escaped, 25
And in wing'd accents plaintive thus began.
Light of my eyes, thou comest ; it is thyself,

Sweetest Telemachus ! I had no hope
 To see thee more, once told that o'er the Deep
 Thou hadst departed for the Pylian coast. 30
 Enter, my precious son ; that I may soothe
 My soul with sight of thee from far arrived,
 For seldom thou thy feeders and thy farm
 Visitest, in the city custom'd much
 To make abode, that thou may' st witness there
 The manners of those hungry suitors proud.

To whom Telemachus, discreet, replied.
 It will be so. There is great need, my friend !
 But here, for thy sake, have I now arrived,
 That I may look on thee, and from thy lips 40
 Learn if my mother still reside at home,
 Or have become spouse of some other Chief,
 Leaving untenantled Ulysses' bed
 To be by noisome spiders webb'd around.

To whom the master-swineherd in return.
 Not so, she, patient still as ever, dwells
 Beneath thy roof, but all her cheerless days
 Despairing wastes, and all her nights in tears.

So saying, Eumæus at his hand received
 His brazen lance, and o'er the step of stone
 Enter'd Telemachus, to whom his sire 50
 Relinquish'd, soon as he appear'd, his seat,
 But him Telemachus forbidding, said—

Guest, keep thy seat ; our cottage will afford
 Some other, which Eumæus will provide.

He ceased, and he, returning at the word,
 Reposed again ; then good Eumæus spread
 Green twigs beneath, which, cover'd with a fleece,
 Supplied Ulysses' offspring with a seat.
 He next disposed his dishes on the board 60
 With relics charged of yesterday ; with bread
 Alert, he heap'd the baskets ; with rich wine
 His ivy-cup replenish'd ; and a seat
 Took opposite to his illustrious Lord
 Ulysses. They toward the plenteous feast 65
 Stretch'd forth their hands, (and hunger now and thirst
 Both satisfied,) Telemachus, his speech
 Addressing to their generous host, began.

Whence is this guest, my father ? How convey'd
 Came he to Ithaca ? What country boast
 The mariners with whom he here arrived ?
 For that on foot he found us not, is sure.

70

To whom, Eumeus, thou didst thus reply.

I will with truth answer thee, O my son !

He boasts him sprung from ancestry renown'd
 In spacious Crete, and hath the cities seen
 Of various lands, by fate ordain'd to roam.

75

Even now, from a Thesprotian ship escaped,
 He reach'd my cottage—but he is thy own ;
 I yield him to thee ; treat him as thou wilt ;
 He is thy suppliant, and depends on thee.

80

Then thus, Telemachus, discreet, replied.

Thy words, Eumeus, pain my very soul.

For what security can I afford

To any in my house ? myself am young,

85

Nor yet of strength sufficient to repel

An offer'd insult ; and my mother's mind

In doubtful balance hangs, if still with me

An inmate, she shall manage my concerns,

Attentive only to her absent Lord

90

And her own good report, or shall espouse

The noblest of her wooers, and the best

Entitled by the splendour of his gifts.

But I will give him, since I find him lodged

A guest beneath thy roof, tunic and cloak,

95

Sword double-edged, and sandals to his feet,

With convoy to the country of his choice.

Still, if it please thee, keep him here thy guest,

And I will send him raiment, with supplies

Of all sorts, lest he burden thee and thine.

100

But where the suitors come, there shall not he

With my consent, nor stand exposed to pride

And petulance like theirs, lest by some sneer

They wound him, and through him wound also me ;

For little is it that the boldest can

105

Against so many ; numbers will prevail.

Him answer'd then Ulysses toil-inured.

Oh amiable and good ! since even I

Am free to answer thee, I will avow

My heart within me torn by what I hear
Of those injurious suitors, who the house
Infest of one noble as thou appear'st.
But say—submittest thou to their control
Willingly, or because the people, sway'd
By some response oracular, incline 110
Against thee? Thou hast brothers, it may chance,
Slow to assist thee,—for a brother's aid
Is of importance in whatever cause.
For oh that I had youth as I have will,
Or that renown'd Ulysses were my sire, 120
Or that myself might wander home again,
Whereof hope yet remains! then might I lose
My head, that moment, by an alien's hand,
If I would fail, entering Ulysses' gate,
To be the bane and mischief of them all. 125
But if alone to multitudes opposed
I should perchance be foil'd, nobler it were
With my own people, under my own roof
To perish, than to witness evermore
Their unexampled deeds, guests shov'd aside, 130
Maidens dragg'd forcibly from room to room,
Casks emptied of their rich contents, and them
Indulging glutinous appetite day by day
Enormous, without measure, without end.
To whom Telemachus, discreet, replied. 135
Stranger! thy questions shall from me receive
True answer. Enmity or hatred none
Subsists the people and myself between,
Nor have I brothers to accuse, whose aid
Is of importance in whatever cause, 140
For Jove hath from of old with single heirs
Our house supplied; Arcesias none begat
Except Laertes, and Laertes none
Except Ulysses, and Ulysses me
Left here his only one, and unenjoy'd. 145
Thence comes it that our palace swarms with foes;
For all the rulers of the neighbour-isles,
Samos, Dulichium, and the forest-crown'd
Zacynthus, others also rulers here
In craggy Ithaca, my mother seek 150

In marriage, and my household stores consume.
 But neither she those nuptial rites abhor'd
 Refuses absolute, nor yet consents
 To end them ; they my patrimony waste
 Meantime, and will destroy me also soon,
 As I expect, but heaven disposes all. 155

Eumæus ! haste, my father ! bear with speed
 News to Penelope that I am safe,
 And have arrived from Pylus ; I will wait
 Till thou return ; and well beware that none 160
 Hear thee beside, for I have many foes.

To whom, Eumæus, thou didst thus reply.
 It is enough. I understand. Thou speak'st
 To one intelligent. But say beside,
 Shall I not also, as I go, inform 165
 Distress'd Laertes ? who while yet he mourn'd
 Ulysses only, could o'ersee the works,
 And dieted among his menials oft
 As hunger prompted him ; but now, they say,
 Since thy departure to the Pylian shore, 170
 He neither eats as he was wont, nor drinks,
 Nor oversees his hinds, but sighing sits
 And weeping, wasted even to the bone.

Him then Telemachus answer'd discreet, ●
 Hard though it be, yet to his tears and sighs
 Him leave we now. We cannot what we would.
 For were the ordering of all events 175
 Referr'd to our own choice, our first desire
 Should be to see my father's glad return.
 But once thy tidings told, wander not thou
 In quest of Him, but hither speed again.
 Rather request my mother that she send 180
 Her household's governess without delay
 Privately to him ; she shall best inform
 The ancient King that I have safe arrived. 185

He said, and urged him forth, who binding on
 His sandals, to the city bent his way.
 Nor went Eumæus from his home unmark'd
 By Pallas, who in semblance of a fair
 Damsel, accomplish'd in domestic arts, 190
 Approaching to the cottage' entrance, stood

Opposite, by Ulysses plain discern'd,
But to his son invisible; for the Gods
Appear not manifest alike to all.
The mastiffs saw her also, and with tone
Querulous hid themselves, yet bark'd they not.
She beckon'd him abroad. Ulysses saw
The sign, and issuing through the outer court,
Approach'd her, whom the Goddess thus bespake.

Laertes' progeny, for wiles renown'd!

Disclose thyself to thy own son, that death
Concerting and destruction to your foes,
Ye may the royal city seek, nor long
Shall ye my presence there desire in vain,
For I am ardent to begin the fight.

Minerva spake, and with her rod of gold
Touch'd him; his mantle, first, and vest she made
Pure as new-blanch'd; dilating, next, his form,
She gave dimensions ampler to his limbs;
Swarthy again his manly hue became,
Round his full face, and black his bushy chin.
The change perform'd, Minerva disappear'd,
And the illustrious Hero turn'd again
Into the cottage; wonder at that sight
Seized on Telemachus; askance he look'd,
Awe-struck, not unsuspicious of a God,
And in wing'd accents eager thus began.

Thou art no longer, whom I lately saw,
Nor are thy clothes, nor is thy port the same.
Thou art a God, I know, and dwell'st in heaven.
Oh, smile on us, that we may yield thee rites
Acceptable, and present thee golden gifts
Elaborate; ah spare us, Power divine!

To whom Ulysses, Hero toil-inured.
I am no God. Why deem'st thou me divine?
I am thy father, for whose sake thou lead'st
A life of woe, by violence oppress'd.

So saying, he kiss'd his son, while from his cheeks
Tears trickled, tears till then perforce restrain'd.
Telemachus, (for he believed him not
His father yet,) thus wondering spake again.

My father, saidst thou? no. Thou art not He,

195

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230

But some Divinity beguiles my soul
 With mockeries, to afflict me still the more ;
 For never mortal man could so have wrought
 By his own power ; some interposing God
 Alone could render thee both young and old,
 For old thou wast of late, and foully clad,
 But wear'st the semblance now of those in heaven !

To whom Ulysses, ever wise, replied.

240

Telemachus ! it is not well, my son !
 That thou should'st greet thy father with a face
 Of wild astonishment, and stand aghast.

Ulysses, save myself, none comes, be sure.

Such as thou seest, after ten thousand woes

245

Which I have borne, I visit once again

My native country in the twentieth year.

This wonder Athenæan Pallas wrought,

She clothed me even in what form she would,

For so she can. Now poor I seem and old,

250

Now young again, and clad in fresh attire.

The Gods who dwell in yonder heaven, with ease

Dignify or debase a mortal man.

So saying, he sat. Then threw Telemachus

His arms around his father's neck, and wept.

255

Desire intense of lamentation seized

On both ; soft murmurs uttering, each indulged

His grief, more frequent wailing than the bird,

(Eagle, or hook-nail'd vulture) from whose nest

Some swain hath stolen her yet unfeather'd young.

260

So from their eyelids they big drops distill'd

Of tenderest grief, nor had the setting sun

Cessation of their weeping seen, had not

Telemachus his father thus address'd.

What ship convey'd thee to thy native shore,

265

My father ! and what country boast the crew ?

For that on foot thou not arrivedst, is sure.

Then thus divine Ulysses toil-inured.

My son ! I will explicit all relate.

Conducted by Phæacia's maritime sons

270

I came, a race accustomed to convey

Strangers who visit them across the Deep.

Me o'er the billows in a rapid bark

Borne sleeping, on the shores of Ithaca
 They laid ; rich gifts they gave me also, brass,
 Gold in full bags, and beautiful attire,
 Which, warn'd from heaven, I have in caves conceal'd.
 By Pallas prompted, hither I repair'd
 That we might plan the slaughter of our foes,
 Whose numbers tell me now, that I may know
 How powerful, certainly, and who they are,
 And consultation with my dauntless heart
 May hold, if we be able to contend
 Ourselves with all, or must have aid beside.

275

280

285

Then answer thus his son, discreet, return'd.
 My father ! thy renown hath ever rung
 In thy son's ears, and by report thy force
 In arms, and wisdom I have oft been told.
 But terribly thou speak'st ; amazement-fixt
 I hear ; can two a multitude oppose,
 And valiant warriors all ? For neither ten
 Are they, nor twenty, but more numerous far.
 Learn now their numbers. Fifty youths and two
 Came from Dulichium ; they are chosen men,
 And six attendants follow in their train ;

290

From Samos twenty youths and four arrive,
 Zacynthus also of Achaia's sons
 Sends twenty more, and our own island adds,
 Herself, her twelve chief rulers ; Medon, too,
 Is there the herald, and the bard divine,
 With other two, intendants of the board.
 Should we within the palace, we alone,
 Assail them all, I fear lest thy revenge
 Unpleasant to thyself and deadly prove,
 Frustrating thy return. But recollect—

295

300

305

Think, if thou canst, on whose confederate arm
 Strenuous on our behalf we may rely.

To him replied his patient father bold.

I will inform thee. Mark. Weigh well my words.

Will Pallas and the everlasting Sire

310

Alone suffice ? or need we other aids ?

Then answer thus Telemachus return'd.

Good friends indeed are they whom thou hast named,
 Though thronged above the clouds ; for their control

Is universal both in earth and heaven. 315

To whom Ulysses, toil-worn Chief renown'd.
Not long will they from battle stand aloof,
When once within my palace, in the strength
Of Mars, to sharp decision we shall urge
The suitors. But thyself at early dawn 320
Our mansion seek, that thou may'st mingle there
With that imperious throng; me in due time
Eumeus to the city shall conduct,
In form a miserable beggar old.

But should they with dishonourable scorn 325
Insult me, thou unmoved my wrongs endure;
And should they even drag me by the feet
Abroad, or smite me with the spear, thy wrath
Refraining, gently counsel them to cease
From such extravagance; but well I know 330
That cease they will not, for their hour is come.
And mark me well; treasure what now I say
Deep in thy soul. When Pallas shall, herself,
Suggest the measure, then shaking my brows,
I will admonish thee; thou at the sign, 335
Remove what arms soever in the hall
Remain, and in the upper palace safe
Dispose them; should the suitors, missing them,
Perchance interrogate thee, then reply
Gently—I have removed them from the smoke; 340
For they appear no more the arms which erst
Ulysses, going hence to Ilium, left,
But smirch'd and sullied by the breath of fire.
This weightier reason (thou shalt also say,) 345
Jove taught me; lest, intoxicate with wine,
Ye should assault each other in your brawls,
Shaming both feast and courtship; for the view
Itself of arms incites to their abuse.

Yet leave two faulchions for ourselves alone,
Two spears, two bucklers, which with sudden force 350
Impetuous we will seize, and Jove all-wise
Their valour shall, and Pallas, steal away.
This word store also in remembrance deep—
If mine in truth thou art, and of my blood,
Then, of Ulysses to his home return'd 355

Let none hear news from thee, no, not my sire
 Laertes, nor Eumæus, nor of all
 The menials any, or even Penelope,
 That thou and I, alone, may search the drift
 Of our domestic women, and may prove
 Our serving-men, who honours and reveres
 And who contemns us both, but chiefly thee
 So gracious, and so worthy to be loved.

360

Him then thus answer'd his illustrious son.
 Trust me, my father! thou shalt soon be taught
 That I am not of drowsy mind obtuse.
 But this I think not likely to avail
 Or thee or me ; ponder it yet again ;
 For tedious were the task, farm after farm
 To visit of those servants, proving each,
 And the proud suitors merciless devour
 Meantime thy substance, nor abstain from aught.
 Learn, if thou wilt, (and I that course myself
 Advise) who slightst thee of the female train,
 And who is guiltless ; but I would not try
 From house to house the men, far better proved
 Hereafter, if in truth by signs from heaven
 Inform'd, thou hast been taught the will of Jove.

365

Thus they conferr'd. The gallant bark, meantime,
 Reach'd Ithaca, which from the Pylian shore
 Had brought Telemachus with all his band.

370

Within the many-fathom'd port arrived
 His lusty followers haled her far aground,
 Then carried thence their arms, but to the house
 Of Clytius the illustrious gifts convey'd.

375

Next to the royal mansion they dispatch'd
 An herald, charged with tidings to the Queen,
 That her Telemachus had reach'd the cot
 Of good Eumæus, and the bark had sent
 Home to the city ; lest the matchless dame
 Should still deplore the absence of her son.

380

They then, the herald and the swine-herd, each
 Bearing like message to his mistress, met,
 And at the palace of the godlike Chief
 Arriving, compass'd by the female throng
 Inquisitive, the herald thus began.

395

Thy son, O Queen ! is safe ; even now return'd.
 Then, drawing nigh to her, Eumæus told
 His message also from her son received,
 And, his commission punctually discharged,
 Leaving the palace, sought his home again. 400

Grief seized and anguish, at those tidings, all
 The suitors ; issuing forth, on the outside
 Of the high wall they sat, before the gate,
 When Polybus' son, Eurymachus began. 405

My friends ! his arduous task, this voyage, deem'd
 By us impossible, in our despite
 Telemachus hath achieved. Haste ! launch we forth
 A sable bark, our best, which let us man
 With mariners expert, who, rowing forth 410
 Swiftly, shall summon our companions home.

Scarce had he said, when turning where he sat,
 Amphionomus beheld a bark arrived
 Just then in port ; he saw them furling sail,
 And seated with their oars in hand ; he laugh'd
 Through pleasure at that sight, and thus he spake. 415

Our message may be spared. Lo ! they arrive.
 Either some God inform'd them, or they saw,
 Themselves, the vessel of Telemachus
 Too swiftly passing to be reach'd by theirs. 420

He spake ; they, rising, hastened to the shore.
 Alert they drew the sable bark aground,
 And by his servant each his arms dispatch'd
 To his own home. Then all to council close
 Assembling, neither elder of the land 425
 Nor youth allow'd to join them, and the rest
 Eupithe's son, Antinoüs, thus bespake.

Ah ! how the Gods have rescued him ! all day
 Perch'd on the airy mountain-top, our spies
 Successive watch'd ; and when the sun declined,
 We never slept on shore, but all night long,
 Till sacred dawn arose, plough'd the abyss,
 Hoping Telemachus, that we might seize
 And slay him, whom some Deity hath led,
 In our despite, safe to his home again. 430
 But frame we yet again means to destroy
 Telemachus ; ah—let not Him escape ! 435

For end of this our task, while he survives,
 None shall be found, such prudence he displays
 And wisdom ; neither are the people now
 Unanimous our friends as heretofore. 440
 Come, then—prevent him, ere he call the Greeks
 To council ; for he will not long delay,
 But will be angry, doubtless, and will tell
 Amid them all, how we in vain devised
 His death, a deed which they will scarce applaud,
 But will, perhaps, punish and drive us forth
 From our own country to a distant land.— 445
 Prevent him, therefore, quickly ; in the field
 Slay him, or on the road ; so shall his wealth
 And his possessions on ourselves devolve,
 Which we will share equally, but his house
 Shall be the Queen's, and his whom she shall wed.

Yet, if not so inclined, ye rather choose
 That he should live and occupy entire 455
 His patrimony, then, no longer, here
 Assembled, let us revel at his cost,
 But let us all with spousal gifts produced
 From our respective treasures, woo the Queen,
 Leaving her in full freedom to espouse 460
 Who proffers most, and whom the fates ordain.

He ceased ; the assembly silent sat and mute.
 Then rose Amphinomus amid them all,
 Offspring renown'd of Nisus, son himself
 Of King Aretias. He had thither led 465
 The suitor train who from the pleasant isle
 Corn-clad, of green Dulichium had arrived,
 And by his speech pleased far beyond them all
 Penelope, for he was just and wise,
 And thus, well-counselling the rest, began. 470

Not I, my friends ! far be the thought from me
 To slay Telemachus ! it were a deed
 Momentous, terrible, to slay a prince.
 First, therefore, let us counsel ask of heaven,
 And if Jove's oracle that course approve, 475
 I will encourage you, and will myself
 Be active in his death ; but if the Gods
 Forbid it, then, by my advice, forbear.

So spake Amphinomus, whom all approved.
Arising then, into Ulysses' house 480
They went, where each his splendid seat resumed.
A novel purpose occupied, meantime,
Penelope; she purposed to appear
Before her suitors, whose design to slay
Telemachus she had from Medon learn'd, 485
The herald, for his ear had caught the sound.
Toward the hall with her attendant train
She moved, and when, most graceful of her sex,
Where sat the suitors she arrived, between
The columns standing of the stately dome, 490
And covering with her white veil's lucid folds
Her features, to Antinoüs thus she spake.
Antinoüs, proud, contentious, evermore
To mischief prone! the people deem thee wise
Past thy compeers, and in all grace of speech 495
Preeminent, but such wast never thou.
Inhuman! why is it thy dark design
To slay Telemachus? and why with scorn
Rejectest thou the suppliant's prayer,¹ which Jove
Himself hath witness'd? Plots please not the Gods. 500
Know'st not that thy own father refuge found
Here, when he fled before the people's wrath
Whom he had irritated by a wrong
Which, with a band of Taphian robbers join'd,
He offered to the Thesproti, our allies? 505
They would have torn his heart, and would have laid
All his delights and his possessions waste,
But my Ulysses slaked the furious heat
Of their revenge, whom thou requitest now
Wasting his goods, soliciting his wife, 510
Slaying his son, and filling me with woe.
But cease, I charge thee, and bid cease the rest.
To whom the son of Polybus replied,
Eurymachus.—Icarius' daughter wise!
Take courage, fair Penelope, and chase 515
These fears unreasonable from thy mind!
The man lives not, nor shall, who while I live,

¹ Alluding probably to entreaties made to him at some former time by herself and Telemachus, that he would not harm them. Clarke.

Aud faculty of sight retain, shall harm
 Telemachus, thy son. For thus I say,
 And thus will I perform ; his blood shall stream
 A sable current from my lance's point
 That moment ; for the city-waster Chief
 Ulysses, oft, me placing on his knees,
 Hath fill'd my infant grasp with savoury food,
 And given me ruddy wine. I, therefore, hold
 Telemachus of all men most my friend,
 Nor hath he death to fear from hand of ours.
 Yet, if the Gods shall doom him, die he must.

520

So he encouraged her, who yet, himself,
 Plotted his death. She, re-ascending, sought
 Her stately chamber, and, arriving there,
 Deplored with tears her long-regretted Lord
 Till Athenæan Pallas azure-eyed
 Dews of soft slumber o'er her lids diffused.

530

And now, at even-tide, Eumæus reach'd
 Ulysses and his son. A yearling swine
 Just slain they skilfully for food prepared,
 When Pallas, drawing nigh, smote with her wand
 Ulysses, at the stroke rendering him old,
 And his apparel sordid as before,
 Lest, knowing him, the swain at once should seek
 Penelope, and let the secret forth.

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Then foremost him Telemachus address'd.
 Noble Eumæus ! thou art come ; what news
 Bring'st from the city ? Have the warrior band
 Of suitors, hopeless of their ambush, reach'd
 The port again, or wait they still for me ?

545

To whom, Eumæus, thou didst thus reply.
 No time for such enquiry, nor to range,
 Curious, the streets had I, but anxious wish'd
 To make my message known, and to return.
 But, as it chanced, a nimble herald sent
 From thy companions, met me on the way,
 Who reach'd thy mother first. Yet this I know,
 For this I saw. Passing above the town
 Where they have piled a way-side hill of stones
 To Mercury, I beheld a gallant bark

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555

Entering the port ; a bark she was of ours,
The crew were numerous, and I mark'd her deep-
Laden with shields and spears of double edge. 560
Theirs I conjectured her, and could no more.

He spake, and, by Eumæus unperceived,
Telemachus his father eyed and smiled.
Their task accomplish'd, and the table spread,
They ate, nor any his due portion miss'd,
And hunger now and thirst both sated, all 565
To rest repair'd, and took the gift of sleep.

BOOK XVII.

A R G U M E N T.

Telemachus returns to the city, and relates to his mother the principal passages of his voyage; Ulysses, conducted by Eumæus, arrives there also, and enters among the suitors, having been known only by his old dog Argus, who dies at his feet. The curiosity of Penelope being excited by the account which Eumæus gives her of Ulysses, she orders him immediately into her presence, but Ulysses postpones the interview till evening, when the suitors having left the palace, there shall be no danger of interruption. Eumæus returns to his cottage.

Now look'd Aurora from the East abroad,
When the illustrious offspring of divine
Ulysses bound his sandals to his feet ;
He seized his sturdy spear match'd to his gripe,
And to the city meditating quick
Departure now, the swine-herd thus bespake.

Father ! I seek the city to convince
My mother of my safe return, whose tears,
I judge, and lamentations shall not cease
Till her own eyes behold me. But I lay
On thee this charge. Into the city lead,
Thyselv, this hapless guest, that he may beg
Provision there, a morsel and a drop
From such as may, perchance, vouchsafe the boon.

I cannot, vex'd and harass'd as I am,
Feed all, and should the stranger take offence,
The worse for him. Plain truth is my delight.

To whom Ulysses, ever wise, replied.
Nor is it my desire to be detained.
Better the mendicant in cities seeks
His dole, vouchsafe it whosoever may,
Than in the villages. I am not young,
Nor longer of an age that well accords
With rural tasks, nor could I all perform

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That it might please a master to command. 25
 Go then, and when I shall have warm'd my limbs
 Before the hearth, and when the risen sun
 Shall somewhat chase the cold, thy servant's task
 Shall be to guide me thither, as thou bidd'st.
 For this is a vile garb ; the frosty air 30
 Of morning will benumb me thus attired,
 And, as ye say, the city is remote.

He ended, and Telemachus in haste
 Set forth, his thoughts all teeming as he went,
 With dire revenge. Soon in the palace-courts 35
 Arriving, he reclined his spear against
 A column and proceeded to the hall.
 Him Euryclea, first, his nurse perceived,
 While on the variegated seats she spread
 Their fleecy covering ; swift with tearful eyes 40
 She flew to him, and the whole female train
 Of brave Ulysses swarm'd around his son,
 Clasping him, and his forehead and his neck
 Kissing affectionate ; then came herself, 45
 As golden Venus or Diana fair,
 Forth from her chamber to her son's embrace,
 The chaste Penelope ; with tears she threw
 Her arms around him, his bright-beaming eyes
 And forehead kiss'd, and with a murmur'd plaint 50
 Maternal in wing'd accents thus began.
 Thou hast return'd, light of my eyes ! my son !
 My loved Telemachus ! I had no hope
 To see thee more when once thou hadst embark'd
 For Pylus, privily, and with no consent
 From me obtain'd, news seeking of thy sire. 55
 But haste ; unfold. Declare what thou hast seen.

To whom Telemachus, discreet, replied.
 Ah mother ! let my sorrows rest, nor me
 From death so lately 'scaped afflict anew,
 But, bathed and habited in fresh attire, 60
 With all the maidens of thy train ascend
 To thy superior chamber, there to vow
 A perfect hecatomb to all the Gods,
 When Jove shall have avenged our numerous wrongs.
 I seek the forum, there to introduce 65

A guest, my follower from the Pylian shore,
Whom sending forward with my noble band,
I bade Piræus to his own abode
Lead him, and with all kindness entertain
The stranger, till I should myself arrive.

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He spake, nor flew his words useless away.
She, bathed and habited in fresh attire,
Vow'd a full hecatomb to all the Gods,
Would Jove but recompense her numerous wrongs.
Then, spear in hand, went forth her son, two dogs
Fleet-footed following him. O'er all his form
Pallas diffused a dignity divine,
And every eye gazed on him as he pass'd.
The suitors throng'd him round, joy on their lips
And welcome, but deep mischief in their hearts.
He, shunning all that crowd, chose to himself
A seat, where Mentor sat, and Antiphus,
And Halytherses, long his father's friends
Sincere, who of his voyage much enquired.
Then drew Piræus nigh, leading his guest
Toward the forum ; nor Telemachus
Stood long aloof, but greeted his approach,
And was accosted by Piræus thus.

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Sir ! send thy menial women to bring home
The precious charge committed to my care,
Thy gifts at Menelaüs' hands received.

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To whom Telemachus, discreet, replied.
Piræus ! wait ; for I not yet foresee
The upshot. Should these haughty ones effect
My death, clandestine, under my own roof,
And parcel my inheritance by lot,
I rather wish those treasures thine, than theirs.
But should I with success plan for them all
A bloody death, then, wing'd with joy, thyself
Bring home those presents to thy joyful friend.

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So saying, he led the anxious stranger thence
Into the royal mansion, where arrived,
Each cast his mantle on a couch or throne,
And plunged his feet into a polish'd bath.
There wash'd and lubricated with smooth oils,
From the attendant maidens each received

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Tunic and shaggy mantle. Thus attired,
 Forth from the baths they stepp'd, and sat again.
 A maiden, next, with golden ewer charged,
 And silver bowl, pour'd water on their hands,
 And spread the polish'd table, which with food
 Of all kinds, remnants of the last regale,
 The mistress of the household charge supplied,
 Meantime, beside a column of the dome
 His mother, on a couch reclining, twirl'd
 Her slender threads. They to the furnish'd board
 Stretch'd forth their hands, and hunger now and thirst
 Both satisfied, Penelope began. 110

Telemachus ! I will ascend again,
 And will repose me on my woful bed ; 120
 For such it hath been, and with tears of mine
 Ceaseless bedew'd, e'er since Ulysses went
 With Atreus' sons to Troy. For not a word
 Thou would'st vouchsafe me till our haughty guests
 Had occupied the house again, of all
 That thou hast heard (if aught indeed thou hast) 125
 Of thy long-absent father's wish'd return.

Her answer'd then Telemachus discreet.
 Mother ! at thy request I will with truth
 Relate the whole. At Pylus' shore arrived 130
 We Nestor found, chief of the Pylian race.
 Receiving me in his august abode,
 He entertain'd me with such welcome kind
 As a glad father shews to his own son
 Long-lost and newly found ; so Nestor me, 135
 And his illustrious offspring, entertain'd,
 But yet assured me that he nought had heard
 From mortal lips of my magnanimous sire,
 Whether alive or dead ; with his own steeds
 He sent me, and with splendid chariot thence
 To spear-famed Menelaüs, Atreus' son. 140
 There saw I Helen, by the Gods' decree
 Authoress of trouble both to Greece and Troy.
 The Hero Menelaüs then enquired
 What cause had urged me to the pleasant vale 145
 Of Lacedæmon ; plainly I rehearsed
 The occasion, and the Hero thus replied.

Ye Gods ! they are ambitious of the bed
Of a brave man, however base themselves.
But, as it chances when the hart hath laid
Her fawns new-yean'd and sucklings yet, to rest
In some resistless lion's den, she roams
Meantime the hills, and in the grassy vales
Feeds heedless, but the lion to his lair
Returning soon, both her and hers destroys,
So shall thy father, brave Ulysses, them.

Jove ! Pallas ! and Apollo ! oh that such
As erst in well-built Lesbos, where he strove
With Philomelides, whom wrestling, flat
He threw, when all Achaia's sons rejoiced,
Ulysses now might mingle with his foes !
Short life and bitter nuptials should be theirs.
But thy inquiries neither indirect
Will I evade, nor give thee false reply,

But all that from the Ancient of the Deep¹
I have received will utter, hiding nought.
The God declared that he had seen thy sire
In a lone island, sorrowing, and detain'd
An inmate in the grotto of the nymph
Calypso, wanting also means by which
To reach the country of his birth again,
For neither gallant barks nor friends had he
To speed his passage o'er the boundless waves.

So Menelaus spake, the spear-renown'd.
My errand thus accomplish'd, I return'd—
And by the Gods with gales propitious blest,
Was wafted swiftly to my native shore.

He spake, and tumult in his mother's heart
So speaking, raised. Consolatory, next,
The godlike Theoclymenus began.

Consort revered of Laertiades !
Little the Spartan knew, but list to me,
For I will plainly prophesy and sure.
Be Jove of all in heaven my witness first,
Then, this thy hospitable board, and, last,
The household Gods of the illustrious Chief

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¹ Proteus.

Ulysses, at whose hearth² I have arrived,
 That, even now, within his native isle
 Ulysses somewhere sits, or creeps obscure,
 Witness of these enormities, and seeds
 Sowing of dire destruction for his foes ;
 So sure an augury, while on the deck
 Reclining of the gallant bark, I saw,
 And with loud voice proclaim'd it to thy son.

Him answer'd then Penelope discreet.

Grant heaven, my guest, that this good word of thine
 Fail not ! then shalt thou soon such bounty share
 And friendship at my hands, that at first sight
 Whoe'er shall meet thee shall pronounce thee blest.

Thus they conferr'd. Meantime the suitors hurl'd
 The quoit and lance on the smooth area spread
 Before Ulysses' gate, the custom'd scene
 Of their contentions, sports, and clarsours rude.
 But when the hour of supper now approach'd,
 And from the pastures on all sides the sheep
 Came with their wonted drivers, Medon then
 (For he of all the heralds pleased them most,
 And waited at the board) them thus address'd.

Enough of play, young princes ! entering now
 The house, prepare we sedulous our feast,
 Since in well-timed refreshment harm is none.

He spake, whose admonition pleased. At once
 All rising sought the palace ; there arrived,
 Each cast his mantle off, which on his throne
 Or couch he spread, then brisk to slaughter fell
 Of many a victim ; sheep and goats and brawns
 They slew, all fatted, and a pastured ox,
 Hastening the banquet ; nor with less dispatch
 Ulysses and Eumæus now prepared
 To seek the town, when thus the swain began.

My guest ! since thy fix'd purpose is to seek
 This day the city as my master bade,
 Though I, in truth, much rather wish thee here
 A keeper of our herds, yet through respect
 And reverence of his orders, whose reproof

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² The hearth was the altar on which the lares or household gods were worshipped.

I dread, for masters seldom gently chide,
I would be gone. Arise, let us depart,
For day already is far-spent, and soon
The air of even-tide will chill thee more.

To whom Ulysses, ever-wise, replied. 230
It is enough. I understand. Thou speak'st
To one intelligent. Let us depart,
And lead, thyself, the way ; but give me, first,
(If thou have one already hewn,) a staff
To lean on, for ye have described the road
Rugged, and oftentimes dangerous to the foot.

So saying, his tatter'd wallet o'er his back
He cast, suspended by a leathern twist,
Eumæus gratified him with a staff,
And forth they went, leaving the cottage kept
By dogs and swains. He city-ward his King
Led on, in form a squalid beggar old,
Halting, and in unseemly garb attired.
But when, slow-travelling the craggy way,
They now approach'd the town, and had attain'd
The marble fountain deep, which with its streams
Pellucid all the citizens supplied,
(Ithacus had that fountain framed of old
With Neritus and Polycitor, over which
A grove of water nourish'd alders hung
Circular on all sides, while cold the rill
Ran from the rock, on whose tall summit stood
The altar of the nymphs, by all who pass'd
With sacrifice frequented, still, and prayer ;)
Melanthius, son of Dolius, at that fount
Met them ; the chosen goats of every flock,
With two assistants, from the field he drove,
The suitors' supper. He, seeing them both,
In surly accent boorish, such as fired
Ulysses with resentment, thus began. 260

Ay—this is well—the villain leads the vile ;—
Thus evermore the Gods join like to like.
Thou clumsy swine-herd, whither would'st conduct
This morsel-hunting mendicant obscene,
Defiler base of banquets ? many a post 265
Shall he rub smooth that props him while he begs

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Lean alms, sole object of his low pursuit,
Who ne'er to sword or tripod yet aspired.
Would'st thou afford him to me for a guard
Or sweeper of my stalls, or to supply 270
My kids with leaves, he should on bulkier thewes
Supported stand, though nourish'd but with whey.
But no such useful arts hath he acquired,
Nor likes he work, but rather much to extort
From others food for his unsated maw. 275
But mark my prophecy, for it is true,
At famed Ulysses' house should he arrive,
His sides shall shatter many a footstool hurl'd
Against them by the offended princes there.

He spake, and drawing nigh, with his raised foot, 280
Insolent as he was and brutish, smote
Ulysses' haunch, yet shook not from his path
The firm-set Chief, who doubtful mused awhile
Whether to rush on him, and with his staff
To slay him, or uplifting him on high, 285
Downward to dash him headlong; but his wrath
Restraining, calm he suffer'd the affront.
Him then Eumeus with indignant look
Rebuking, raised his hands, and fervent pray'd.
Nymphs of the fountains, progeny of Jove! 290
If e'er Ulysses on your altar burn'd
The thighs of fatted lambs or kidlings, grant
This my request. O let the Hero soon,
Conducted by some Deity, return!
So shall he quell that arrogance which safe 295
Thou now indulgest, roaming day by day
The city, while bad shepherds mar the flocks.

To whom the goat-herd answer thus return'd
Melanthius. Marvellous! how rare a speech
The subtle cur hath framed! whom I will send 300
Far hence at a convenient time on board
My bark, and sell him at no little gain.
I would, that he who bears the silver bow
As sure might pierce Telemachus this day
In his own house, or that the suitors might, 305
As that same wanderer shall return no more!

He said, and them left pacing slow along;

But soon, himself, at his Lord's house arrived ;
 There entering bold, he with the suitors sat
 Opposite to Eurymachus, for him
 He valued most. The sewers his portion placed
 Of meat before him, and the maiden, chief
 Directress of the household, gave him bread.
 And now, Ulysses, with the swain his friend
 Approach'd, when, hearing the harmonious lyre,
 Both stood, for Phemius had begun his song.
 He grasp'd the swine-herd's hand, and thus he said.

310

This house, Eumæus ! of Ulysses seems
 Passing magnificent, and to be known
 With ease for his among a thousand more.
 One pile supports another, and a wall
 Crested with battlements surrounds the court ;
 Firm too the folding doors all force of man
 Defy ; but numerous guests, as I perceive,
 Now feast within ; witness the savoury steam
 Fast fuming upward, and the sounding harp,
 Divine associate of the festive board.

320

To whom, Eumæus, thou didst thus reply.
 Thou hast well guess'd ; no wonder ; thou art quick
 On every theme ; but let us well forecast
 This business. Wilt thou, entering first thyself
 The splendid mansion, with the suitors mix,
 Me leaving here ? or shall I lead the way
 While thou remain'st behind ? yet linger not,
 Lest seeing thee without, some servant strike
 Or drive thee hence. Consider which were best.

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Him answer'd then the patient Hero bold.
 It is enough. I understand. Thou speak'st
 To one intelligent. Lead thou the way,
 Me leaving here, for neither stripes nor blows
 To me are strange. Much exercised with pain
 In fight and on the Deep, I have long since
 Learn'd patience. Follow next what follow may !
 But to suppress the appetite, I deem
 Impossible ; the stomach is a source
 Of ills to man, an avaricious gulf
 Destructive, which to satiate, ships are rigg'd,
 Seas traversed, and fierce battles waged remote.

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Thus they discoursing stood ; Argus the while,
Ulysses' dog, uplifted where he lay 350
His head and ears erect. Ulysses him
Had bred long since himself, but rarely used,
Departing first to Ilium. Him the youths
In other days led frequent to the chase
Of wild goat, hart, and hare ; but now he lodged
A poor old cast-off, of his Lord forlorn,
Where mules and oxen had before the gate
Much ordure left, with which Ulysses' hinds
Should in due time manure his spacious fields.

There lay, with dog-devouring vermin foul 360
All over, Argus ; soon as he perceived
Long-lost Ulysses nigh, down fell his ears
Clapp'd close, and with his tail glad sign he gave
Of gratulation, impotent to rise
And to approach his master as of old. 365
Ulysses, noting him, wiped off a tear
Unmark'd, and of Eumæus quick enquired.
I can but wonder seeing such a dog
Thus lodged, Eumæus ! beautiful in form
He is, past doubt, but whether he hath been 370
As fleet as fair I know not ; rather such
Perchance as masters sometimes keep to grace
Their tables, nourish'd more for show than use.

To whom, Eumæus, thou didst thus reply.
He is the dog of one dead far remote. 375
But had he now such feat-performing strength
As when Ulysses left him going hence
To Ilium, in one moment thou shouldst mark,
Astonish'd, his agility and force.
He never in the sylvan deep recess 380
The wild beast saw that 'scaped him, and he track'd
Their steps infallible ; but he hath now
No comfort, for (the master dead afar)
Their heedless servants care not for his dog.
Domestics, missing once their Lord's control, 385
Grow wilful, and refuse their proper tasks ;
For whom Jove dooms to servitude, he takes
At once the half of that man's worth away.

He said, and, entering at the portal, join'd

s. c.—8.

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The suitors. Then his destiny released
Old Argus, soon as he had lived to see
Ulysses in the twentieth year restored.

Godlike Telemachus, long ere the rest,
Marking the swine-herd's entrance, with a nod
Summon'd him to approach. Eumæus cast
His eye around, and seeing vacant there
The seat which the dispenser of the feast
Was wont to occupy while he supplied
The numerous guests, planted it right before
Telemachus, and at his table sat,
On which the herald placed for him his share
Of meat, and from the baskets gave him bread.
Soon after *him*, Ulysses enter'd slow
The palace, like a squalid beggar old,
Staff-prop'd, and in loose tatters foul attired.
Within the portal on the ashen sill
He sat, and seeming languid, lean'd against
A cypress pillar by the builder's art
Polish'd long since, and planted at the door.
Then took Telemachus a loaf entire
Forth from the elegant basket, and of flesh
A portion large as his two hands contain'd,
And beck'ning close the swine-herd, charged him thus.

These to the stranger ; whom advise to ask
Some dole from every suitor ; bashful fear
Ill suits the mendicant by want oppress'd.

He spake ; Eumæus went, and where he sat
Arriving, in wing'd accents thus began.

Telemachus, oh stranger, sends thee these,
And counsels thee to importune for more
The suitors, one by one ; for bashful fear
Ill suits the mendicant by want oppress'd.

To whom Ulysses, ever-wise, replied.
Jove, King of all, grant every good on earth
To kind Telemachus, and the complete
Accomplishment of all that he desires !

He said, and with both hands outspread, the mess
Receiving as he sat, on his worn bag
Disposed it at his feet. Long as the bard
Chaunted, he ate, and when he ceased to eat,

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Then also ceased the bard divine to sing.
And now ensued loud clamour in the hall
And tumult, when Minerva, drawing nigh
To Laertiades, impelled the Chief
Crusts to collect, or any pittance small
At every suitor's hand, for trial's sake
Of just and unjust ; yet deliverance none
From evil she design'd for any there.
From left to right³ his progress he began
Petitioning, with outstretch'd hands, the throng,
As one familiar with the beggar's art.
They pitying gave to him, but view'd him still
With wonder, and enquiries mutual made
Who, and whence was he ? Then the goat-herd rose
Melanthius, and the assembly thus address'd.
Hear me, ye suitors of the illustrious Queen !
This guest, of whom ye ask, I have beheld
Elsewhere ; the swine-herd brought him ; but himself
I know not, neither who nor whence he is.
So he ; then thus Antinoüs stern rebuked
The swine-herd. Ah, notorious as thou art,
Why hast thou shewn this vagabond the way
Into the city ? are we not enough
Infested with these troublers of our feasts ?
Deem'st it a trifle that such numbers eat
At thy Lord's cost, and hast thou, therefore, led
This fellow hither, found we know not where ?
To whom, Eumæus, thou didst thus reply.
Antinoüs ! though of high degree, thou speak'st
Not wisely. What man to another's house
Repairs to invite him to a feast, unless
He be of those who by profession serve
The public, prophet, healer of disease,
Ingenious artist, or some bard divine
Whose music may exhilarate the guests ?
These, and such only, are in every land
Call'd to the banquet ; none invites the poor,
Who much consume, and no requital yield.
But thou of all the suitors roughly treat'st

³ That he might begin auspiciously. Wine was served in the same direction. F.

Ulysses' servants most, and chiefly me ;
Yet thee I heed not, while the virtuous Queen
Dwells in this palace, and her godlike son.

470

To whom Telemachus, discreet, replied.
Peace ! answer not verbose a man like him.
Antinoüs hath a tongue accustom'd much
To tauntings, and promotes them in the rest.

475

Then, turning to Antinoüs, quick he said—
Antinoüs ! as a father for his son
Takes thought, so thou for me, who bidd'st me chase
The stranger harshly hence ; but God⁴ forbid !

480

Impart to him. I grudge not, but myself
Exhort thee to it ; neither, in this cause,
Fear thou the Queen, or in the least regard
Whatever menial throughout all the house
Of famed Ulysses. Ah ! within thy breast

485

Dwells no such thought ; thou lovest not to impart
To others, but to gratify thyself.

To whom Antinoüs answer thus return'd.
High-soaring and intemperate in thy speech,
How hast thou said, Telemachus ? Would all
As much bestow on him, he should not seek
Admittance here again three months to come.

490

So saying, he seized the stool which, banqueting,
He press'd with his nice feet, and from beneath
The table forth advanced it into view.
The rest all gave to him, with bread and flesh
Filling his wallet, and Ulysses, now,

495

Returning to his threshold, there to taste
The bounty of the Greeks, paused in his way
Beside Antinoüs, whom he thus address'd.

500

Kind sir, vouchsafe to me ! for thou appear'st
Not least, but greatest of the Achaians here,
And hast a kingly look. It might become
Thee therefore above others to bestow,
So should I praise thee wheresoe'er I roam.

505

I also lived the happy owner once
Of such a stately mansion, and have given
To numerous wanderers (whencesoe'er they came)
All that they needed ; I was also served

⁴ Here again Θεὸς occurs in the abstract.

By many, and enjoy'd all that denotes
The envied owner opulent and blest. 510

But Jove (for so it pleased him) hath reduced
My all to nothing, prompting me, in league
With rovers of the Deep, to sail afar
To Egypt, for my sure destruction there. 515

Within the Egyptian stream my barks well oar'd
I station'd, and, enjoining strict my friends
To watch them close-attendant at their side,
Commanded spies into the hill-tops ; but they,
Under the impulse of a spirit rash 520

And hot for quarrel, the well-cultured fields
Pillaged of the Egyptians, captive led
Their wives and little-ones, and slew the men.
Ere long, the loud alarm their city reach'd.
Down came the citizens, by dawn of day, 525

With horse and foot and with the gleam of arms
Filling the plain. Then Jove with panic dread
Struck all my people ; none found courage more
To stand, for mischiefs swarm'd on every side.
There, numerous by the glittering spear we fell 530

Slaughter'd, while others they conducted thence
Alive to servitude ; but me they gave
To Dmetor, King in Cyprus, Jasus' son ;
He entertain'd me liberally, and thence
This land I reach'd, but poor and woe-begone. 535

Then answer thus Antinoüs harsh return'd.
What demon introduced this nuisance here,
This troubler of our feast ? stand yonder, keep
Due distance from my table, or expect
To see an Egypt and a Cyprus worse 540

Than those, bold mendicant, and void of shame !
Thou hauntest each, and inconsiderate each
Gives to thee, because gifts at others' cost
Are cheap, and, plentifully served themselves,
They squander, heedless, viands not their own. 545

To whom Ulysses, while he slow retired.
Gods ! how illiberal with that specious form !
Thou wouldst not grant the poor a grain of salt
From thy own board, who at another's fed
So nobly, canst not spare a crust to me. 550

He spake ; then raged Antinoüs still the more,
And in wing'd accents, louring, thus replied.

Take such dismission now as thou deservest,
Opprobrious ! hast thou dared to scoff at me ?

So saying, he seized his stool, and on the joint
Of his right shoulder smote him ; firm as rock
He stood, by no such force to be displaced,
But silent shook his brows, and dreadful deeds
Of vengeance ruminating, sought again
His seat the threshold, where his bag full-charged
He grounded, and the suitors thus address'd.

555

Hear now, ye suitors of the matchless Queen,
My bosom's dictates. Trivial is the harm,
Scarce felt, if, fighting for his own, his sheep
Perchance, or beeves, a man receive a blow.
But me Antinoüs struck, for that I ask'd
Food from him merely to appease the pangs
Of hunger, source of numerous ills to man.
If then the poor man have a God to avenge
His wrongs, I pray to him that death may seize
Antinoüs, ere his nuptial hour arrive !

565

To whom Antinoüs answer thus return'd,
Son of Eupithes. Either seated there
Or going hence, eat, stranger, and be still ;
Lest for thy insolence, by hand or foot
We drag thee forth, and thou be flay'd alive.

575

He ceased, whom all indignant heard, and thus
Even his own proud companions censured him.

Antinoüs ! thou didst not well to smite
The wretched vagabond. O thou art doom'd
For ever, if there be a God in heaven⁵ ;
For in similitude of strangers oft,
The Gods, who can with ease all shapes assume,
Repair to populous cities, where they mark
The outrageous and the righteous deeds of men.

580

585

⁵ Εἰ δη πε τις επινερνιος Θεος εῖτι.

Eustathius, and Clarke after him, understand an aposeopesis here, as if the speaker meant to say—what if there should be ? or—suppose there should be ? But the sentence seems to fall in better with what follows interpreted as above, and it is a sense of the passage not unwarranted by the opinion of other commentators.—See Schaufelbergerus.

So they, for whose reproof he little cared.
 But in his heart Telemachus that blow
 Resented, anguish-torn, yet not a tear
 He shed, but silent shook his brows, and mused
 Terrible things. Penelope, meantime, 590
 Told of the wanderer so abused beneath
 Her roof, among her maidens thus exclaim'd.
 So may Apollo, glorious archer, smite
 Thee also ! Then Eurynome replied,
 Oh might our prayers prevail, none of them all 595
 Should see bright-charioted Aurora more.
 Her answer'd then Penelope discreet.
 Nurse ! they are odious all, for that alike
 All teem with mischief ! but Antinoüs' looks
 Remind me ever of the gloom of death. 600
 A stranger hath arrived, who, begging, roams
 The house (for so his penury enjoins) ;
 The rest have given him, and have fill'd his bag
 With viands, but Antinoüs hath bruised
 His shoulder with a foot-stool hurl'd at him. 605
 While thus the Queen conversing with her train
 In her own chamber sat, Ulysses made
 Plenteous repast. Then calling to her side
 Eumæus, thus she signified her will.
 Eumæus, noble friend ! bid now approach 610
 Yon stranger. I would speak with him, and ask
 If he have seen Ulysses, or have heard
 Tidings, perchance, of the afflicted Chief,
 For much a wanderer by his garb he seems.
 To whom, Eumæus, thou didst thus reply. 615
 Were those Achaians silent, thou should'st hear,
 O Queen ! a tale that would console thy heart.
 Three nights I housed him, and within my cot
 Three days detain'd him, (for his ship he left
 A fugitive, and came direct to me,) 620
 But half untold his history still remains.
 As when his eye one fixes on a bard
 From heaven instructed in such themes as charm
 The ear of mortals, ever as he sings
 The people press insatiable to hear, 625
 So, in my cottage, seated at my side,

That stranger with his tale enchanted me.
 Laertes, he affirms, hath been his guest
 Erewhile in Crete, where Minos' race resides.
 And thence he hath arrived, after great loss,
 A suppliant to the very earth abased ;
 He adds, that in Thesprotia's neighbour realm
 He of Ulysses heard, both that he lives,
 And that he comes laden with riches home.

630

To whom Penelope, discreet, replied.
 Haste ; call him. I would hear myself his tale.
 Meantime, let these, or in the palace gate
 Sport jocular, or here ; their hearts are light,
 For their possessions are secure ; *their* wine
 None drinks, or eats *their* viands, save their own ;
 While my abode, day after day, themselves
 Haunting, my beeves and sheep, and fatted goats
 Slay for the banquet, and my casks exhaust
 Extravagant, whence endless waste ensues ;
 For no such friend as was Ulysses once
 Have I to expel the mischief. But might he
 Revisit once his native shores again,
 Then aided by his son, he should avenge,
 Incontinent, the wrongs which now I mourn.

645

Then sneezed Telemachus with sudden force,
 That all the palace rang ; his mother laugh'd,
 And in wing'd accents thus the swain bespake.

650

Haste—bid him hither—heard'st thou not the sneeze
 Propitious of my son ? oh might it prove
 A presage of inevitable death
 To all these revellers ! may none escape !
 Now mark me well. Should the event his tale
 Confirm, at my own hands he shall receive
 Mantle and tunic both for his reward.

655

She spake ; he went, and where Ulysses sat
 Arriving, in wing'd accents thus began.

660

Penelope, my venerable friend !
 Calls thee, the mother of Telemachus.
 Oppress'd by numerous troubles, she desires
 To ask thee tidings of her absent Lord.
 And should the event verify thy report,
 Thy meed shall be (a boon which much thou need'st)

665

Tunic and mantle ; but she gives no more ;
 Thy sustenance⁶ thou must, as now, obtain,
 Begging it at their hands who choose to give.

670

Then thus Ulysses, Hero toil-inured.

Eumæus ! readily I can relate
 Truth, and truth only, to the prudent Queen
 Icarius' daughter ; for of him I know
 Much, and have suffer'd sorrows like his own.
 But dread I feel of this imperious throng
 Perverse, whose riot and outrageous acts
 Of violence echo through the vault of heaven.

675

And even now, when for no fault of mine
 Yon suitor struck me as I pass'd, and fill'd
 My flesh with pain, neither Telemachus
 Nor any interposed to stay his arm.
 Now, therefore, let Penelope, although
 Impatient, till the sun descend postpone
 Her questions ; then she may enquire secure
 When comes her husband, and may nearer place
 My seat to the hearth-side, for thinly clad
 Thou know'st I am, whose aid I first implored.

680

He ceased ; at whose reply Eumæus sought
 Again the queen, but ere he yet had pass'd
 The threshold, thus she greeted his return.

685

Comest thou alone, Eumæus ? why delays
 The invited wanderer ? dreads he other harm ?
 Or sees he aught that with a bashful awe
 Fills him ? the bashful poor are poor indeed.

695

To whom, Eumæus, thou didst thus reply.
 He hath well spoken ; none who would decline
 The rudeness of this contumelious throng
 Could answer otherwise ; thee he entreats
 To wait till sun-set, and that course, O Queen,
 Thou shalt thyself far more commodious find,
 To hold thy conference with the guest, alone.

700

Then answer thus Penelope return'd.
 The stranger, I perceive, is not unwise,
 Whoe'er he be, for on the earth are none
 Proud, insolent, and profligate as these.

705

⁶ This seems added by Eumæus to cut off from Ulysses the hope that might otherwise tempt him to use fiction.

So spake the Queen. Then (all his message told)
The good Eumæus to the suitors went
Again, and with his head inclined toward
Telemachus, lest others should his words
Witness, in accents wing'd him thus address'd.

710

Friend and kind master! I return to keep
My herds, and to attend my rural charge,
Whence we are both sustain'd. Keep thou, meantime,
All here with vigilance, but chiefly watch
For thy own good, and save *thyself* from harm ;
For numerous here brood mischief, whom the Gods
Exterminate, ere yet their plots prevail !

715

To whom Telemachus, discreet, replied.
So be it, father! and (thy evening-mess
Eaten) depart ; to-morrow come again,
Bringing fair victims hither ; I will keep,
I and the Gods, meantime, all here secure.

720

He ended ; then resumed once more the swain
His polish'd seat, and both with wine and food
Now satiate, to his charge return'd, the court
Leaving and all the palace throng'd with guests ;
They (for it now was evening) all alike
Turn'd jovial to the song and to the dance.

725

BOOK XVIII.

A R G U M E N T.

The beggar Irus arrives at the palace ; a combat takes place between him and Ulysses, in which Irus is by one blow vanquished. Penelope appears to the suitors, and having reminded them of the presents which she had a right to expect from them, receives a gift from each. Eury-machus, provoked by a speech of Ulysses, flings a footstool at him, which knocks down the cup-bearer ; a general tumult is the consequence, which continues until, by the advice of Telemachus, seconded by Amphinomus, the suitors retire to their respective homes.

Now came a public mendicant, a man
Accustom'd, seeking alms, to roam the streets
Of Ithaca ; one never sated yet
With food or drink ; yet muscle had he none,
Or strength of limb, though giant-built in show.

Arnaeus was the name which at his birth
His mother gave him, but the youthful band
Of suitors, whom as messenger he served,
All named him Irus. He, arriving, sought
To drive Ulysses forth from his own home,
And in rough accents rude him thus rebuked.

Forth from the porch, old man ! lest by the foot
I drag thee quickly forth. Seest not how all
Wink on me, and by signs give me command
To drag thee hence ? nor is it aught but shame
That checks me. Yet arise, lest soon with fists
Thou force me to adjust our difference.

To whom Ulysses, louring dark, replied.
Peace, fellow ! neither word nor deed of mine
Wrongs thee, nor feel I envy at the boon,
However plentiful, which thou receivest.
The sill may hold us both ; thou dost not well
To envy others ; thou appear'st like me
A vagrant ; plenty is the gift of heaven.

5

10

15

20

But urge me not to trial of our fists,
Lest thou provoke me, and I stain with blood
Thy bosom and thy lips, old as I am.
So, my attendance should to-morrow prove
More tranquil here ; for thou should'st leave, I judge,
Ulysses' mansion never to return.

25

A solemn oath, that none, for Irus' sake,
Shall, interposing, smite me with his fist
Clandestine, forcing me to yield the prize.

He ceased, and, as he bade, all present swore
A solemn oath ; then thus, amid them all
Standing, Telemachus majestic spake.

Guest ! if thy courage and thy manly mind
Prompt thee to banish this man hence, no force
Fear thou beside, for who smites thee, shall find
Yet other foes to cope with ; I am here
In the host's office, and the royal Chiefs
Eurymachus and Antinoüs, alike
Discreet, accord unanimous with me.

He ceased, whom all approved. Then, with his rags

Ulysses braced for decency his loins

Around, but gave to view his brawny thighs
Proportion'd fair, and stripp'd his shoulders broad,
His chest and arms robust ; while, at his side,
Dilating more the Hero's limbs and more,
Minerva stood ; the assembly with fix'd eyes
Astonish'd gazed on him, and looking full
On his next friend, a suitor thus remark'd.

Irus shall be in Irus found no more.

He hath pull'd evil on himself. What thewes
And what a haunch the senior's tatters hid !

So he,—meantime in Irus' heart arose
Horrible tumult ; yet, his loins by force
Girding, the servants dragg'd him to the fight
Pale, and his flesh all quivering as he came ;
Whose terrors thus Antinoüs sharp rebuked.

Now, wherefore livest, and why wast ever born,
Thou mountain-mass of earth ! if such dismay
Shake thee at thought of combat with a man
Ancient as he, and worn with many woes ?
But mark, I threaten not in vain ; should he
O'ercome thee, and in force superior prove,
To Echetus thou goest ; my sable bark
Shall waft thee to Epirus, where he reigns
Enemy of mankind ; of nose and ears
He shall despoil thee with his ruthless steel,
And tearing by the roots the parts away

70

75

80

85

90

95

100

105

That mark thy sex, shall cast them to the dogs.¹

He said ; *His* limbs new terrors at that sound
Shook under him ; into the middle space
They led him, and each raised his hands on high.

110

Then doubtful stood Ulysses toil-inured,
Whether to strike him lifeless to the earth
At once, or fell him with a managed blow.

To smite with managed force at length he chose
As wisest, lest, betray'd by his own strength,
He should be known. With elevated fists
Both stood ; him Irus on the shoulder struck,

115

But he his adversary on the neck
Pash'd close beneath his ear ; he split the bones,
And blood in sable streams ran from his mouth.
With many an hideous yell he dropp'd, his teeth

120

Chatter'd, and with his heels he drumm'd the ground.
The wooers, at that sight, lifting their hands
In glad surprise, laugh'd all their breath away.

125

Then through the vestibule, and right across
The court, Ulysses dragg'd him by the foot
Into the portico, where propping him
Against the wall, and giving him his staff,
In accents wing'd he bade him thus farewell.

130

There seated now, dogs drive and swine away,
Nor claim (thyself so base) supreme control
O'er other guests and mendicants, lest harm
Reach thee, hereafter, heavier still than this.

So saying, his tatter'd wallet o'er his back
He threw suspended by its leathern twist,
And toward the threshold turning, sat again.
They laughing ceaseless still, the palace-door
Re-enter'd, and him, courteous, thus bespake.

135

Jove, and all Jove's assessors in the skies,
Vouchsafe thee, stranger, whatsoe'er it be,
Thy heart's desire! who hast our ears relieved
From that insatiate beggar's irksome tone.
Soon to Epirus he shall go, dispatch'd
To Echetus the King, pest of mankind.

140

¹ Tradition says that Echetus, for a love-affair, condemned his daughter to lose her eyes, and to grind iron barley-grains, while her lover was doomed to suffer what Antinoüs threatens to Irus. F.

So they ; to whose propitious words the Chief
Listen'd delighted. Then Antinoüs placed 145
The paunch before him, and Amphinomus
Two loaves, selected from the rest ; he fill'd
A goblet also, drank to him, and said,
My father, hail ! O stranger, be thy lot 150
Hereafter blest, though adverse now and hard !

To whom Ulysses, ever-wise, replied.
To me, Amphinomus, endued thou seem'st
With much discretion, who art also son
Of such a sire, whose fair report I know, 155
Dulichian Nysus opulent and good.
Fame speaks thee his, and thou appear'st a man
Judicious ; hear me, therefore ; mark me well.
Earth nourishes, of all that breathe or creep,
No creature weak as man ; for while the Gods 160
Grant him prosperity and health, no fear
Hath he, or thought, that he shall ever mourn ;
But when the Gods with evils unforeseen
Smite him, he bears them with a grudging mind ;
For such as the complexion of his lot 165
By the appointment of the Sire of all,
Such is the colour of the mind of man.
I, too, have been familiar in my day
With wealth and ease, but I was then self-will'd,
And many wrong'd, embolden'd by the thought 170
Of my own father's and my brethren's power.
Let no man, therefore, be unjust, but each
Use modestly what gift soe'er of heaven.
So do not these. These ever bent I see
On deeds injurious, the possessions large 175
Consuming, and dishonouring the wife
Of one, who will not, as I judge, remain
Long absent from his home, but is, perchance,
Even at the door. Thee, therefore, may the Gods
Steal hence in time ; ah, meet not his return 180
To his own country ! for they will not part
(He and the suitors) without blood, I think,
If once he enter at these gates again !

He ended, and libation pouring, quaff'd
The generous juice, then in the prince's hand 185

Replaced the cup ; he, pensive, and his head
 Inclining low, pass'd from him ; for his heart
 Foreboded ill ; yet 'scaped not even he,
 But in the snare of Pallas caught, his life
 To the heroic arm and spear resign'd
 Of brave Telemachus. Reaching, at length,
 The seat whence he had risen, he sat again.

190

Minerva then, Goddess cœrulean-eyed,
 Prompted Icarius' daughter to appear
 Before the suitors ; so to expose the more
 Their drift iniquitous, and that herself
 More bright than ever in her husband's eyes
 Might shine, and in her son's. Much mirth she feign'd²,
 And bursting into laughter, thus began.

195

I wish, Eurynome ! (who never felt
 That wish till now) though I detest them all,
 To appear before the suitors, in whose ears
 I will admonish, for his good, my son,
 Not to associate with that lawless crew
 Too much, who speak him fair, but foul intend.

200

Then answer thus Eurynome return'd.
 My daughter ! wisely hast thou said and well.
 Go ! bathe thee and anoint thy face, then give
 To thy dear son such counsel as thou wilt
 Without reserve ; but show not there thy cheeks
 Sullied with tears, for profit none accrues
 From grief like thine, that never knows a change.
 And he is now bearded, and hath attain'd
 That age which thou wast wont with warmest prayer
 To implore the Gods that he might live to see.

210

215

Her answer'd, then, Penelope discreet.
 Persuade not me, though studious of my good,
 To bathe, Eurynome ! or to anoint
 My face with oil ; for all my charms the Gods,
 Inhabitants of Olympus, then destroy'd
 When he, embarking, left me. Go, command
 Hippodamia and Autonœ
 That they attend me to the hall, and wait
 Beside me there ; for decency forbids
 That I should enter to the men alone.

220

225

² This seems the sort of laughter intended by the word *Αχετιον*.

She ceased, and through the house the ancient dame
Hasted to summon whom she had enjoin'd.

But Pallas, Goddess of the azure eyes,
Diffused, meantime, the kindly dew of sleep
Around Icarius' daughter; on her couch
Reclining, soon as she reclined, she dozed,
And yielded to soft slumber all her frame.

230

Then, that the suitors might admire her more,
The glorious Goddess clothed her, as she lay,
With beauty of the skies; her lovely face
She with ambrosia purified, with such

235

As Cytherea chaplet-crown'd employs
Herself, when in the eye-ensnaring dance
She joins the Graces; to a statelier height
Beneath her touch, an ampler size she grew,

240

And fairer than the elephantine bone
Fresh from the carver's hand. These gifts conferr'd
Divine, the awful Deity retired.

And now, loud-prattling as they came, arrived
Her handmaids; sleep forsook her at the sound,
She wiped away a tear, and thus she said.

245

Me gentle sleep, sad mourner as I am,
Hath here involved. O would that by a death
As gentle chaste Diana would herself
This moment set me free, that I might waste
My life no longer in heart-felt regret
Of a lamented husband's various worth
And virtue, for in Greece no Peer had he!

250

She said, and through her chamber's stately door
Issuing, descended; neither went she sole,
But with those two fair menials of her train.

255

Arriving, most majestic of her sex,
In presence of the numerous guests beneath
The portal of the stately dome she stood
Between her maidens, with her lucid veil
Mantling her lovely cheeks. Then every knee
Trembled, and every heart with amorous heat
Dissolved, her charms all coveting alike,
While to Telemachus her son she spake.

260

Telemachus! thou art no longer wise
As once thou wast, and even when a child.

265

For thriven as thou art, and at full size
 Arrived of man, so fair-proportion'd too,
 That even a stranger, looking on thy growth
 And beauty, would pronounce thee nobly born,
 Yet is thy intellect still immature.

270

For what is this? why suffer'st thou a guest
 To be abused in thy own palace? how?
 Knowest not that if the stranger seated here
 Endure vexation, the disgrace is thine?

275

Her answer'd then Telemachus discreet.

I blame thee not, my mother, that thou feel'st
 Thine anger moved; yet want I not a mind
 Able to mark and to discern between
 Evil and good, child as I lately was,
 Although I find not promptitude of thought
 Sufficient always, overawed and check'd
 By such a multitude, all bent alike
 On mischief, of whom none takes part with me.

280

But Irus and the stranger have not fought,
 Urged by the suitors, and the stranger proved
 Victorious; yes—Heaven knows how much I wish
 That, (in the palace some, some in the court,)
 The suitors all sat vanquish'd, with their heads
 Depending low, and with enfeebled limbs,
 Even as that same Irus, while I speak
 With chin on bosom propp'd at the hall-gate
 Sits drunkard-like, incapable to stand
 Erect, or to regain his proper home.

290

So they; and now addressing to the Queen
 His speech, Eurymachus thus interposed.

295

O daughter of Icarius! could all eyes
 Throughout Iäsonian³ Argos view thy charms,
 Discreet Penelope! more suitors still
 Assembling in thy courts would banquet here
 From morn to eve; for thou surpassest far
 In beauty, stature, worth, all womankind.

300

To whom replied Penelope discreet.
 The Gods, Eurymachus! reduced to nought
 My virtue, beauty, stature, when the Greeks,
 Whom my Ulysses follow'd, sail'd to Troy.

305

³ From Iäsus, once King of Peloponnesus.

Could he, returning, my domestic charge
Himself intend, far better would my fame
Be so secured, and wider far diffused.

But I am wretched now, such storms the Gods
Of woe have sent me. When he left his home,
Clasping my wrist with his right hand, he said.

My love ! for I imagine not that all

The warrior Greeks shall safe from Troy return,
Since fame reports the Trojans brave in fight,

310

Skill'd in the spear, mighty to draw the bow,

And nimble vaulters to the backs of steeds

High-mettled, which to speediest issue bring

The dreadful struggle of all-wasting war,—

315

I know not, therefore, whether Heaven intend

My safe return, or I must perish there.

But manage thou at home. Cherish, as now,

While I am absent, or more dearly still

My parents, and what time our son thou seest

320

Mature, then wed ; wed even whom thou wilt,

And hence to a new home.—Such were his words,

325

All which shall full accomplishment ere long

Receive. The day is near, when hapless I,

Lost to all comfort by the will of Jove,

Must meet the nuptials that my soul abhors.

330

But this thought now afflicts me, and my mind

Continual haunts. Such was not heretofore

The suitors custom'd practice ; all who chose

To engage in competition for a wife

Well-qualitied and well-endow'd, produced

335

From their own herds and fatted flocks a feast

For the bride's friends, and splendid presents made,

But never ate as ye, at others' cost.

She ceased ; then brave Ulysses, toil-inured,

Rejoiced that, soothing them, she sought to draw

340

From each some gift, although on other views,

And more important far, himself intent.

Then thus Antinoüs, Eupithe's son.

Icarius' daughter wise ! only accept

Such gifts as we shall bring, for gifts demand

345

That grace, nor can be decently refused ;

But to our rural labours, or elsewhere

Depart not we, till first thy choice be made
Of the Achaian, chief in thy esteem.

Antinoüs spake, whose answer all approved.
Then each dispatch'd his herald who should bring
His master's gift. Antinoüs' herald, first,
A mantle of surpassing beauty brought,
Wide, various, with no fewer clasps adorn'd
Than twelve, all golden, and to every clasp
Was fitted opposite its eye exact.

Next, to Eurymachus his herald bore
A necklace of wrought gold, with amber rich
Bestudded, every bead bright as a sun.

Two servants for Eurydamas produced
Ear-pendants fashion'd with laborious art,
Broad, triple-gemm'd, of brilliant light profuse,
The herald of Polycitor's son, the prince
Pisander, brought a collar to his Lord,
A sumptuous ornament. Each Grecian gave,
And each a gift dissimilar from all.

Then, loveliest of her sex, turning away,
She sought her chamber, whom her maidens fair
Attended, charged with those illustrious gifts.

Then turn'd they all to dance and pleasant song
Joyous, expecting the approach of even.

Ere long the dusky evening came, and them
Found sporting still. Then, placing in the hall
Three hearths, that should illumine wide the house,
They compass'd them around with fuel-wood
Long-season'd and new-split, mingling the sticks
With torches. The attendant women watch'd
And fed those fires by turns, to whom, himself,
Their unknown Sovereign thus his speech address'd.

Ye maidens of the long regretted Chief
Ulysses! to the inner courts retire,
And to your virtuous Queen, that following there
Your several tasks, spinning and combing wool,
Ye may amuse her; I, meantime, for these
Will furnish light, and should they choose to stay
Till golden morn appear, they shall not tire
My patience aught, for I can much endure.

He said; they tittering on each other gazed.

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But one, Melantho with the blooming cheeks,
Rebuked him rudely. Dolius was her sire, 390
But by Penelope she had been rear'd
With care maternal, and in infant years
Supplied with many a toy ; yet even she
Felt not her mistress' sorrows in her heart,
But of Eurytmachus enamour'd, oft
His lewd embraces met ; she, with sharp speech
Reproachful, to Ulysses thus replied.

Why, what a brainsick vagabond art thou !

Who neither wilt to the smith's forge retire
For sleep, nor to the public portico, 400
But here remaining, with audacious prate
Disturb'st this numerous company, restrain'd
By no respect or fear ; either thou art
With wine intoxicated, or, perchance,
Art always fool, and therefore babblest now. 405
Say, art thou drunk with joy, that thou hast foil'd
The beggar Irus ? Tremble, lest a man
Stronger than Irus suddenly arise,
Who on thy temples pelting thee with blows
Far heavier than his, shall drive thee hence 410
With many a bruise, and foul with thy own blood.

To whom Ulysses, frowning stern, replied.

Snarler ! Telemachus shall be inform'd
This moment of thy eloquent harangue,
That he may hew thee for it, limb from limb. 415

So saying, he scared the women ; back they flew
Into the house, but each with faltering knees
Through dread, for they believed his threats sincere.
He then illumined by the triple blaze
Watch'd close the lights, busy from hearth to hearth, 420
But in his soul, meantime, far other thoughts
Revolved, tremendous, not conceived in vain.

Nor Pallas (that they might exasperate more
Laertes' son) permitted to abstain
From heart-corroding bitterness of speech 425
Those suitors proud, of whom Eurytmachus,
Offspring of Polybus, while thus he jeer'd
Ulysses, set the others in a roar.

Hear me, ye suitors of the illustrious Queen !

I shall promulge my thought. This man, methinks,
Not unconduted by the Gods, hath reach'd
Ulysses' mansion, for to me the light
Of yonder torches altogether seems
His own, an emanation from his head,
Which not the smallest growth of hair obscures.

430

He ended ; and the city-waster Chief
Himself accosted next. Art thou disposed
To serve me, friend ! would I afford thee hire,
A labourer at my farm ? thou shalt not want
Sufficient wages ; thou may'st there collect
Stones for my fences, and may'st plant my oaks,
For which I would supply thee all the year
With food, and clothes, and sandals for thy feet.
But thou hast learn'd less creditable arts,
Nor hast a will to work, preferring much
By beggary from others to extort
Wherewith to feed thy never-sated maw.

440

Then answer thus Ulysses wise return'd.
Forbear, Eurymachus ; for were we match'd
In work against each other, thou and I,
Mowing in spring-time, when the days are long,
I with my well-bent sickle in my hand,
Thou arm'd with one as keen, for trial sake
Of our ability to toil unfed
Till night, grass still sufficing for the proof ;
Or if, again, it were our task to drive
Yoked oxen of the noblest breed, sleek-hair'd,
Big-limb'd, both batten'd to the full with grass,
Their age and aptitude for work the same,
Not soon to be fatigued, and were the field
In size four acres, with a glebe through which
The share might smoothly slide, then should'st thou see
How straight my furrow should be cut and true.
Or should Saturnian Jove this day excite
Here, battle, or elsewhere, and were I arm'd
With two bright spears and with a shield, and bore
A brazen casque well-fitted to my brows,
Me then thou should'st perceive mingling in fight
Amid the foremost Chiefs, nor with the crime
Of idle beggary should'st upbraid me more.

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But thou art much a railer, one whose heart
 Pity moves not, and seem'st a mighty man
 And valiant to thyself, only because
 Thou herd'st with few, and those of little worth.
 But should Ulysses come, at his own isle
 Again arrived, wide as these portals are,
 To thee, at once, too narrow they should seem
 To shoot thee forth with speed enough abroad.

475

He ceased—then tenfold indignation fired
 Eurymachus ; he furrow'd deep his brow
 With frowns, and in wing'd accents thus replied.

480

Wretch, I shall roughly handle thee anon,
 Who thus with fluent prate presumptuous darest
 Disturb this numerous company, restrain'd
 By no respect or fear. Either thou art
 With wine intoxicated, or, perchance,
 Art always fool, and therefore babblest now ;
 Or thou art frantic haply with delight
 That thou hast foil'd yon vagabond obscure.

485

So saying, he seized a stool ; but to the knees
 Ulysses flew of the Dulichian Prince
 Amphinomus, and sat, fearing incensed
 Eurymachus ; he on his better hand
 Smote full the cup-bearer ; on the hall-floor
 Loud rang the fallen beaker, and himself
 Lay on his back clamouring in the dust.
 Straight through the dusky hall tumult ensued
 Among the suitors, of whom thus, a youth,
 With eyes directed to the next, exclaim'd.

490

495

Would that this rambling stranger had elsewhere
 Perish'd, or ever he had here arrived,
 Then no such uproar had he caused as this !
 This doth the beggar ; he it is for whom
 We wrangle thus, and may despair of peace
 Or pleasure more ; now look for strife alone.

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Then in the midst Telemachus upstood
 Majestic, and the suitors thus bespake.
 Sirs ! ye are mad, and can no longer eat
 Or drink in peace ; some demon troubles you.
 But since ye all have feasted, to your homes
 Go now, and, at your pleasure, to your beds ;

510

Soonest were best, but I thrust no man hence.

He ceased ; they gnawing stood their lips, agast
With wonder that Telemachus in his speech
Such boldness used. Then rose Amphinomus,
Brave son of Nisus, offspring of the King
Aretus, and the assembly thus address'd.

My friends ! let none with contradiction thwart
And rude reply words rational and just ;
Assault no more the stranger, nor of all
The servants of renown'd Ulysses here
Harm any. Come. Let the cup-bearer fill
To all, that due libation made, to rest
We may repair at home, leaving the Prince
To accommodate beneath his father's roof
The stranger, for he is the Prince's guest.

He ended, whose advice none disapproved.
The Hero Milius then, Dulichian-born,
And herald of Amphinomus, the cup
Filling, dispensed it, as he stood, to all ;
They, pouring forth to the Immortals, quaff'd
The luscious beverage, and when each had made
Libation, and such measure as he would
Of wine had drunk, then all to rest retired.

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BOOK XIX.

ARGUMENT.

Ulysses and Telemachus remove the arms from the hall to an upper-chamber. The Hero then confers with Penelope, to whom he gives a fictitious narrative of his adventures. Euryclea, while bathing Ulysses, discovers him by a scar on his knee, but he prevents her communication of that discovery to Penelope.

THEY went, but left the noble Chief behind
In his own house, contriving, by the aid
Of Pallas, the destruction of them all,
And thus, in accents wing'd, again he said.

My son! we must remove and safe dispose
All these my well-forged implements of war;
And should the suitors, missing them, enquire
Where are they? thou shalt answer smoothly thus—
I have convey'd them from the reach of smoke,
For they appear no more the same which erst
Ulysses, going hence to Ilium, left,
So smirch'd and sullied by the breath of fire.
This weightier reason (thou shalt also say)
Some God suggested to me,—lest, inflamed
With wine, ye wound each other in your brawls,
Shaming both feast and courtship; for the view
Itself of arms incites to their abuse.

He ceased, and in obedience to his will,
Calling the ancient Euryclea forth,
His nurse, Telemachus enjoin'd her thus.

Go—shut the women in; make fast the doors
Of their apartment, while I safe dispose
Elsewhere my father's implements of war,
Which, during his long absence, here have stood
Till smoke hath sullied them. For I have been
An infant hitherto, but wiser grown,
Would now remove them from the breath of fire.

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Then thus the gentle matron in return.
 Yes truly,—and I wish that now, at length,
 Thou would'st assert the privilege of thy years,
 My son, thyself assuming charge of all,
 Both house and stores ; but who shall bear the light ?
 Since they, it seems, who would, are all forbidden.

To whom Telemachus discreet replied.

This guest ; for no man, from my table fed,
 Come whence he may, shall be an idler here.

He ended, nor his words flew wing'd away,
 But Euryklea bolted every door.

Then, starting to the task, Ulysses caught,
 And his illustrious son, the weapons thence,
 Helmet, and bossy shield, and pointed spear,
 While Pallas from a golden lamp illumed
 The dusky way before them. At that sight
 Alarm'd, the Prince his father thus address'd.

Whence—whence is this, my father ? I behold
 A prodigy ! the walls of the whole house,
 The arches, fir-tree beams, and pillars tall
 Shine in my view, as with the blaze of fire !
 Some Power celestial, doubtless, is within.

To whom Ulysses, ever-wise, replied,
 Soft ! ask no questions. Give no vent to thought.
 Such is the custom of the Powers divine.
 Hence, thou, to bed. I stay, that I may yet
 Both in thy mother and her maidens move
 More curiosity ; yes—she with tears
 Shall question me of all that I have seen.

He ended, and the Prince, at his command,
 Guided by flaming torches, sought the couch
 Where he was wont to sleep, and there he slept
 On that night also, waiting the approach
 Of sacred dawn. Thus was Ulysses left
 Alone, and planning sat in solitude,
 By Pallas' aid, the slaughter of his foes.

At length, Diana-like, or like herself
 All golden Venus, (her apartment left,) 65
 Enter'd Penelope. Beside the hearth
 Her women planted her accustom'd seat
 With silver wreathed and ivory. That throne

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Icmalius made, artist renown'd, and join'd
 A footstool to its splendid frame beneath, 70
 Which ever with an ample fleece they spread.
 There sat discreet Penelope ; then came
 Her beautiful attendants from within,
 Who clear'd the litter'd bread, the board, and cups
 From which the insolent companions drank. 75
 They also raked the embers from the hearths
 Now dim, and with fresh billets piled them high,
 Both for illumination and for warmth.
 Then yet again MelanTho with rude speech
 Opprobrious, thus assail'd Ulysses' ear. 80

Guest—wilt thou trouble us throughout the night
 Ranging the house ? and linger'st thou a spy
 Watching the women ? Hence—get thee abroad,
 Glad of such fare as thou hast found, or soon
 With torches beaten we will thrust thee forth. 85

To whom Ulysses, frowning stern, replied.
 Petulant woman ! wherefore thus incensed
 Inveigh'st thou against me ? is it because
 I am not sleek ? because my garb is mean ?
 Because I beg ? thanks to necessity—
 I would not else. But such as I appear, 90
 Such all who beg and all who wander are.
 I also lived the happy owner once

Of such a stately mansion, and have given
 To numerous wanderers, whencesoe'er they came, 95
 All that they needed ; I was also served
 By many, and enjoy'd all that denotes
 The envied owner opulent and blest.

But Jove (for so it pleased him) hath reduced
 My all to nothing. Therefore well beware
 Thou also, mistress ! lest a day arrive 100

When all these charms by which thou shinest among
 Thy sister-menials, fade ; fear, too, lest her
 Thou should'st perchance irritate, whom thou servest,
 And lest Ulysses come, of whose return

Hope yet survives ; but even though the Chief
 Have perish'd, as ye think, and comes no more,
 Consider yet his son, how bright the gifts
 Shine of Apollo in the illustrious Prince

Telemachus ; no woman, unobserved
By him, can now commit a trespass here ;
His days of heedless infancy are past.

110

He ended, whom Penelope discreet
O'erhearing, her attendant sharp rebuked.

Shameless, audacious woman ! known to me
Is thy great wickedness, which with thy life
Thou shalt atone ; for thou wast well aware,
(Hearing it from myself,) that I design'd
To ask this stranger of my absent Lord,
For whose dear sake I never cease to mourn.

115

Then to her household's governess she said ;
Bring now a seat, and spread it with a fleece,
Eury nome ! that, undisturb'd, the guest
May hear and answer all that I shall ask.

120

She ended. Then the matron brought in haste
A polish'd seat, and spread it with a fleece,
On which the toil-accustom'd Hero sat,
And thus the chaste Penelope began.

125

Stranger ! my first enquiry shall be this—
Who art thou ? whence ? where born, and sprung from whom ?

Then answer thus Ulysses, wise, return'd.

131

O Queen ! uncensurable by the lips
Of mortal man ! thy glory climbs the skies
Unrivalld, like the praise of some great King
Who o'er a numerous people and renown'd
Presiding like a Deity, maintains
Justice and truth. The earth, under his sway,
Her produce yields abundantly ; the trees
Fruit-laden bend ; the lusty flocks bring forth ;
The Ocean teems with finny swarms beneath
His just control, and all the land is blest.

135

Me therefore question of what else thou wilt
In thy own palace, but forbear to ask
From whom I sprang, and of my native land,
Lest thou, reminding me of those sad themes,
Augment my woes ; for I have much endured ;
Nor were it seemly, in another's house,
To pass the hours in sorrow and in tears,
Wearisome when indulged with no regard
To time or place ; thy train (perchance thyself)

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Would blame me, and I should reproach incur
As one tear-deluged through excess of wine.

Him answer'd then Penelope discreet.

The immortal Gods, O stranger, then destroy'd
My form, my grace, my beauty, when the Greeks
Whom my Ulysses follow'd, sail'd to Troy. 155

Could he, returning, my domestic charge
Himself intend, far better would my fame
Be so secured, and wider far diffused.

But I am wretched now, such storms of woe
The Gods have sent me; for as many Chiefs
As hold dominion in the neighbour isles

Samos, Dulichium, and the forest-crown'd
Zacynthus; others, also, rulers here
In pleasant Ithaca, me, loth to wed,

Woo ceaseless, and my household stores consume.
I, therefore, neither guest nor suppliant heed,
Nor public herald more, but with regret

Of my Ulysses wear my soul away.
They, meantime, press my nuptials, which by art 165
I still procrastinate. Some God the thought

Suggested to me, to commence a robe
Of amplest measure and of subtlest woof,
Laborious task; which done, I thus address'd them.

Princes, my suitors! since the noble Chief
Ulysses is no more, enforce not now
My nuptials; wait till I shall finish first

A funeral robe, (lest all my threads be marr'd,)
Which for the ancient Hero I prepare
Laertes, looking for the mournful hour 175
When fate shall snatch him to eternal rest.

Else, I the censure dread of all my sex,
Should he, so wealthy, want at last a shroud.
Such was my speech; they, unsuspicuous all,

With my request complied. Thenceforth, all day
I wove the ample web, and, by the aid 180
Of torches, ravell'd it again at night.

Three years by artifice I thus their suit
Eluded safe; but when the fourth arrived,
And the same season after many moons

And fleeting days return'd, passing my train 190
And

Who had neglected to release the dogs,
 They came, surprised, and reprimanded me.
 Thus, through necessity, not choice, at last
 I have perform'd it, in my own despite.
 But no escape from marriage now remains,
 Nor other subterfuge for me; meantime
 My parents urge my nuptials, and my son
 (Of age to note it) with disgust observes
 His wealth consumed; for he is now become
 Adult, and abler than myself to rule
 The house, a Prince distinguish'd by the Gods.
 Yet, stranger, after all, speak thy descent;
 Say whence thou art; for not of fabulous birth
 Art thou, nor from the oak, nor from the rock.

195

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Her answer'd then Ulysses, ever-wise.

O spouse revered of Laertiades!

Resolvest thou still to learn from whom I sprang?

Learn then; but know that thou shalt much augment

My present grief, natural to a man

Who hath, like me, long exiled from his home

Through various cities of the sons of men

Wander'd remote, and numerous woes endured.

Yet, though it pain me, I will tell thee all.

210

215

There is a land amid the sable flood

Call'd Crete; fair, fruitful, circled by the sea.

Numerous are her inhabitants, a race

Not to be summ'd, and ninety towns she boasts.

Diverse their language is; Achaians some,

And some indigenous are; Cydonians there,

Crest-shaking Dorians, and Pelasgians dwell.

One city in extent the rest exceeds,

Cnossus; the city in which Minos reign'd,

Who, ever at a nine-years-clos'd, conferr'd

With Jove himself; from him my father sprang,

The brave Deucalion; for Deucalion's sons

Were two, myself and King Idomeneus.

To Ilium he, on board his gallant barks

Follow'd the Atridæ. I, the youngest-born,

By my illustrious name, Æthon, am known,

But he ranks foremost both in worth and years.

There I beheld Ulysses, and within

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230

My walls received him ; for a violent wind
 Had driven him from Malea (while he sought
 The shores of Troy) to Crete. The storm his barks 235
 Bore into the Amnisus, for the cave
 Of Ilythia known, a dangerous port,
 And which with difficulty he attain'd.
 He, landing, instant to the city went,
 Seeking Idomeneus ; his friend of old, 240
 As he affirm'd, and one whom much he loved.
 But *he* was far remote, ten days advanced,
 Perhaps eleven, on his course to Troy.
 Him therefore I conducted to my home,
 Where hospitably, and with kindest care 245
 I entertain'd him (for I wanted nought),
 And for himself procured and for his band,
 By public contribution, corn, and wine,
 And beeves for food, that all might be sufficed.
 Twelve days his noble Grecians there abode, 250
 Port-lock'd by Boreas blowing with a force
 Resistless even on the land, some God
 So roused his fury ; but the thirteenth day
 The wind all fell, and they embark'd again.
 With many a fiction specious, as he sat, 255
 He thus her ear amused ; she at the sound
 Melting, with fluent tears her cheeks bedew'd ;
 And as the snow by Zephyrus diffused,
 Melts on the mountain tops, when Eurus breathes,
 And fills the channels of the running streams, 260
 So melted she, and down her lovely cheeks
 Pour'd fast the tears, him mourning as remote
 Who sat beside her. Soft compassion touch'd
 Ulysses of his consort's silent woe ;
 His eyes, as they had been of steel or horn, 265
 Moved not, yet artful, he suppress'd his tears,
 And she, at length, with overflowing grief
 Satiate, replied, and thus enquired again.
 Now, stranger, I shall prove thee, as I judge,
 If thou, indeed, hast entertain'd in Crete 270
 My spouse and his brave followers, as thou say'st.
 Describe his raiment and himself ; his own
 Appearance, and the appearance of his friends.

Then her Ulysses answer'd, ever-wise.
 Hard is the task, O Queen ! (so long a time
 Hath since elapsed,) to tell thee. Twenty years
 Have pass'd since he forsook my native isle,
 Yet, from my best remembrance, I will give
 A likeness of him, such as now I may. 275

A double cloak, thick-piled, Mæonian-dyed,
 The noble Chief had on ; two fastenings held
 The golden clasp, and it display'd in front
 A well-wrought pattern with much art design'd.
 An hound between his fore-feet holding fast
 A dappled fawn, gaped eager on his prey. 280

All wonder'd, seeing how in lifeless gold
 Express'd, the dog with open mouth her throat
 Attempted still, and how the fawn with hoofs
 Thrust trembling forward, struggled to escape.
 That glorious mantle much I noticed, soft
 To touch, as the dried garlick's glossy film ; 285

Such was the smoothness of it, and it shone
 Sun-bright ; full many a maiden, trust me, view'd
 The splendid texture with admiring eyes.
 But mark me now ; deep treasure in thy mind
 This word. I know not if Ulysses wore
 That cloak at home, or whether of his train
 Some warrior gave it to him on his way,
 Or else some host of his ; for many loved
 Ulysses, and with him might few compare. 290

I gave to him, myself, a brazen sword,
 A purple cloak magnificent, and vest
 Of royal length, and, when he sought his bark,
 With princely pomp dismiss'd him from the shore.
 An herald also waited on the Chief, 305

Somewhat his senior ; him I next describe.
 His back was bunch'd, his visage swarthy, curl'd
 His poll, and he was named Eurybates ;
 A man whom most of all his followers far
 Ulysses honour'd, for their minds were one. 310

He ceased ; she, recognizing all the proofs
 Distinctly by Ulysses named, was moved
 Still more to weep, till with o'erflowing grief
 Satiate, at length she answer'd him again.

Henceforth, O stranger, thou who hadst before
My pity, shalt my reverence share and love. 315

I folded for him with these hands the cloak
Which thou describest, produced it when he went,
And gave it to him ; I that splendid clasp
Attach'd to it myself, more to adorn
My honour'd Lord, whom to his native land
Return'd secure I shall receive no more. 320

In such an evil hour Ulysses went
To that bad city never to be named.

To whom Ulysses, ever-wise, replied. 325

Consort revered of Laertiades !

No longer let anxiety impair
Thy beauteous form, nor any grief consume
Thy spirits more for thy Ulysses' sake.
And yet I blame thee not ; a wife deprived
Of her first mate, to whom she had produced
Fair fruit of mutual love, would mourn his loss,
Although he were inferior far to thine,
Whom fame affirms the semblance of the Gods.
But cease to mourn. Hear me. I will relate
A faithful tale, nor will from thee withhold
Such tidings of Ulysses living still,
And of his safe return, as I have heard
Lately, in yon neighbouring opulent land
Of the Thesprotians. He returns enrich'd
With many precious stores from those obtain'd
Whom he hath visited ; but he hath lost,
Departing from Thrinacia's isle, his bark
And all his loved companions in the Deep,
For Jove was adverse to him, and the Sun, 335

Whose beeves his followers slew. They perish'd all
Amid the billowy flood ; but Him, the keel
Bestriding of his bark, the waves at length
Cast forth on the Phœacian's land, a race
Allied to heaven, who reverenced like a God
Thy husband, honour'd him with numerous gifts, 340

And willing were to have convey'd him home.
Ulysses, therefore, had attain'd long since
His native shore, but that he deem'd it best
To travel far, that he might still amass
350

To 355

More wealth ; so much Ulysses all mankind
Excels in policy, and hath no peer.

This information from Thesprotia's King
I gain'd, from Phidon ; to myself he swore
Libation offering under his own roof,

That both the bark was launch'd, and the stout crew
Prepared, that should conduct him to his home.

But me he first dismiss'd ; for, as it chanced,
A ship lay there of the Thesprotians, bound
To corn-enrich'd Dulichium. All the wealth
He shew'd me by the Chief amass'd, a store
To feed the house of yet another Prince
To the tenth generation ; so immense
His treasures were within that palace lodged.

360
Himself he said was to Dodona gone,
Counsel to ask from the oracular oaks
Sublime of Jove, how safest he might seek,
After long exile thence, his native land,
If openly were best, or in disguise.

365
Thus, therefore, he is safe, and at his home
Well-nigh arrived, nor shall his country long
Want him. I swear it with a solemn oath.

First Jove be witness, King and Lord of all !
Next these domestic Gods of the renown'd
Ulysses, in whose royal house I sit, .
370
That thou shalt see my saying all fulfill'd.
Ulysses shall this self-same year return,
This self-same month, ere yet the next begin.

Him answer'd then Penelope discreet.

375
Grant heaven, my guest, that this good word of thine
Fail not ! then, soon shalt thou such bounty share
And friendship at my hands, that, at first sight,
Whoe'er shall meet thee shall pronounce thee blest.

But ah ! my soul forebodes how it will prove ;
380
Neither Ulysses will return, nor thou

Receive safe conduct hence ; for we have here
None, such as once Ulysses was, to rule
His household with authority, and to send
With honourable convoy to his home

The worthy guest, or to regale him here.

385
Give him the bath, my maidens ; spread his couch

With linen soft, with fleecy gaberdines¹
 And rugs of splendid hue, that he may lie
 Waiting, well-warm'd, the golden morn's return.
 Attend him also at the peep of day 400
 With bath and unction, that, his seat resumed
 Here in the palace, he may be prepared
 For breakfast with Telemachus ; and woe
 To him who shall presume to incommod
 Or cause him pain ; that man shall be cashier'd
 Hence instant, burn his anger as it may.
 For how, my honour'd inmate ! shalt thou learn
 That I in wisdom economic aught
 Pass other women, if unbathed, unoil'd,
 Ill-clad, thou sojourn here ? man's life is short. 410
 Whoso is cruel, and to cruel arts
 Addict, on him all men, while yet he lives,
 Call plagues and curses down, and after death
 Scorn and proverbial mockeries hunt his name.
 But men, humane themselves, and given by choice
 To offices humane, from land to land 415
 Are rumour'd honourably by their guests,
 And every tongue is busy in their praise.
 Her answer'd then Ulysses ever-wise.
 Consort revered of Laertiades ! 420
 Warm gaberdines and rugs of splendid hue
 To me have odious been, since first the sight
 Of Crete's snow-mantled mountain-tops I lost,
 Sweeping the billows with extended oars.
 No ; I will pass as I am wont to pass 425
 The sleepless night ; for on a sordid couch
 Outstretch'd, full many a night have I repos'd
 Till golden-charioted Aurora dawn'd.
 Nor me the foot-bath pleases more ; my foot
 Shall none of all thy ministering maidens touch, 430
 Unless there be some ancient matron grave
 Among them, who hath pangs of heart endured
 Numerous, and keen as I have felt myself ;
 Her I refuse not. She may touch my feet.
 Him answer'd then prudent Penelope. 435

¹ A gaberdine is a shaggy cloak of coarse but warm materials. Such always make part of Homer's bed-furniture.

Dear guest ! for of all travellers here arrived
 From distant regions, I have none received
 Discreet as thou, or whom I more have loved,
 So just thy matter is, and with such grace
 Express'd,—I have an ancient maiden grave,
 The nurse who at my hapless husband's birth
 Received him in her arms, and with kind care
 Maternal rear'd him ; she shall wash thy feet,
 Although decrepit. Euryclea, rise !

440

Wash one coeval with thy Lord ; for such
 The feet and hands, it may be, are become
 Of my Ulysses now ; since man beset
 With sorrow once, soon wrinkled grows and old.

445

She said, then Euryclea with both hands
 Covering her face, in tepid tears profuse
 Dissolved, and thus in mournful strains began,

450

Alas ! my son, trouble for thy dear sake
 Distracts me. Jove surely of all mankind
 Thee hated most, though ever in thy heart
 Devoutly given ; for never mortal man
 So many thighs of fatted victims burn'd,
 And chosen hecatombs produced as thou
 To Jove the Thunderer, him entreating still
 That he would grant thee a serene old age,
 And to instruct, thyself, thy glorious son.
 Yet thus the God requites thee, cutting off
 All hope of thy return :—oh ancient sir !

455

Him too, perchance, where'er he sits a guest
 Beneath some foreign roof, the women taunt,
 As all these shameless ones have taunted thee,
 Fearing whose mockery thou forbidd'st their hands
 This office, which Icarius' daughter wise
 To me enjoins, and which I, glad, perform.

460

Yes, I will wash thy feet ; both for her sake
 And for thy own,—for sight of thee hath raised
 A tempest in my mind. Hear now the cause !
 Full many a guest forlorn we entertain,
 But never any have I seen, whose size,
 The fashion of whose foot, and pitch of voice,
 Such likeness of Ulysses show'd, as thine.

465

To whom Ulysses, ever-shrewd, replied.

475

Such close similitude, O ancient dame !
As thou observest between thy Lord and me,
All who have seen us both, have ever found.

He said ; then taking the resplendent vase 480
Allotted always to that use, she first

Infused cold water largely, then the warm.

Ulysses (for beside the hearth he sat) 485
Turn'd quick his face into the shade, alarm'd
Lest, handling him, she should at once remark
His scar, and all his stratagem unveil.

She then, approaching, minister'd the bath
To her own King, and at first touch discern'd

That token, by a bright-tusk'd boar of old 490
Impress'd, what time he to Parnassus went

To visit there Autolycus and his sons,
His mother's noble sire, who all mankind

In furtive arts and fraudulent oaths excell'd.²

For such endowments he by gifts received

From Hermes' self, to whom the thighs of kids 495
He offer'd and of lambs, and, in return,

The watchful Hermes never left his side.

Autolycus, arriving in the isle
Of pleasant Ithaca, the new-born son

Of his own daughter found, whom on his knees 500
At close of supper Euryclea placed,

And thus the royal visitant address'd.

Thyself, Autolycus ! devise a name

For thy own daughter's son, by numerous prayers

Of thine and fervent, from the Gods obtained.

Then answer thus Autolycus return'd.

My daughter and my daughter's spouse ! the name

Which I shall give your boy, that let him bear.

Since after provocation and offence

To numbers given of either sex, I come,

Call him Ulysses ;³ and, when grown mature,

510

² Homer's morals seem to allow to a good man dissimulation, and even

an ambiguous oath, should they be necessary to save him from a villain.

Thus in Book XX. Telemachus swears by Zeus, that he does not hinder

his mother from marrying whom she pleases of the wooers, though at the

same time he is plotting their destruction with his father. F.

³ In the Greek 'ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ' from the verb 'οδυσσω—Irascor, I am

angry.

He shall Parnassus visit, the abode
 Magnificent in which his mother dwelt,
 And where my treasures lie, from my own stores
 I will enrich and send him joyful home.

515

Ulysses, therefore, that he might obtain
 Those princely gifts, went thither. Him arrived,
 With right-hand gratulation and with words
 Of welcome kind, Autolycus received,
 Nor less his offspring; but the mother most
 Of his own mother clung around his neck,
 Amphithea; she with many a fervent kiss
 His forehead press'd, and his bright-beaming eyes.
 Then bade Autolycus his noble sons

520

Set forth a banquet. They, at his command,
 Led in a fatted ox of the fifth year,
 Which slaying first, they spread him carved abroad,
 Then scored his flesh, transfix'd it with the spits,
 And roasting all with culinary skill

525

Exact, gave each a portion. Thus they sat
 Feasting all day, and till the sun declined;
 But when the sun declined, and darkness fell,
 Each sought his couch, and took the gift of sleep.
 Then, soon as day-spring's daughter rosy-palm'd
 Aurora look'd abroad, forth went the hounds,
 And with the hounds Ulysses, and the youths,
 Sons of Autolycus, to chase the boar.

535

Arrived at the Parnassian mount, they climb'd
 His bushy sides, and to his airy heights
 Ere long attain'd. It was the pleasant hour
 When from the gently swelling flood profound
 The sun, emerging, first smote on the fields.
 The hunters reach'd the valley; foremost ran,
 Questing, the hounds; behind them, swift, the sons
 Came of Autolycus, with whom advanced

540

The illustrious Prince Ulysses, pressing close
 The hounds, and brandishing his massy spear.

There, hid in thickest shades, lay an huge boar.

That covert neither rough winds blowing moist
 Could penetrate, nor could the noon-day sun
 Smite through it, or fast falling showers pervade,
 So thick it was, and underneath, the ground

545

550

With litter of dry foliage strew'd profuse.
 Hunters and dogs approaching him, his ear
 The sound of feet perceived ; upridging high
 His bristly back and glaring fire, he sprang
 Forth from the shrubs, and in defiance stood
 Near and right opposite. Ulysses, first,
 Rush'd on him, elevating his long spear
 Ardent to wound him ; but, preventing quick
 His foe, the boar gash'd him above the knee.
 Much flesh, assailing him oblique, he tore
 With his rude tusk, but to the Hero's bone
 Pierced not ; Ulysses *his* right shoulder reach'd ;
 And with a deadly thrust impell'd the point
 Of his bright spear through him and far beyond.
 Loud yell'd the boar, sank in the dust, and died.
 Around Ulysses, then, the busy sons
 Throng'd of Autolycus ; expert they braced
 The wound of the illustrious hunter hold,
 With incantation staunch'd the sable blood,
 And sought in haste their father's house again,
 Whence, heal'd and gratified with splendid gifts,
 They sent him soon rejoicing to his home,
 Themselves rejoicing also. Glad their son
 His parents saw again, and of the scar
 Enquired, where given, and how ? He told them all,
 How to Parnassus with his friends he went,
 Sons of Autolycus, to hunt, and how
 A boar had gash'd him with his ivory tusk. 580

That scar, while chafing him with open palms,
 The matron knew ; she left his foot to fall ;
 Down dropp'd his leg into the vase ; the brass
 Rang, and, o'ertilted by the sudden shock,
 Pour'd forth the water, flooding wide the floor.
Her spirit joy at once and sorrow seized ;
 Tears fill'd her eyes ; her intercepted voice
 Died in her throat ; but to Ulysses' beard
 Her hand advancing, thus, at length she spake. 585

Thou art himself, Ulysses. Oh my son !
 Dear to me, and my master as thou art,
 I knew thee not till I had touch'd the scar.
 She said, and to Penelope her eyes 590

Directed, all impatient to declare
Her own Ulysses even then at home.

595

But she, nor eye nor ear for aught that pass'd
Had then, her fix'd attention so entire
Minerva had engaged. Then, darting forth
His arms, the Hero with his right-hand close
Compress'd her throat, and nearer to himself,
Drawing her with his left, thus caution'd her.

600

Why would'st thou ruin me? Thou gavest me milk
Thyselv from thy own breast. See me return'd
After long sufferings, in the twentieth year,
To my own land. But since (some God the thought
Suggesting to thee) thou hast learn'd the truth,
Silence! lest others learn it from thy lips.
For this I say, nor shall the threat be vain;
If God vouchsafe to me to overcome
The haughty suitors, when I shall inflict
Death on the other women of my house,
Although my nurse, thyself shalt also die.

605

Him answer'd Euryklea then, discreet.
My son! oh how could so severe a word
Escape thy lips? my fortitude of mind
Thou know'st, and even now shalt prove me firm
As iron, secret as the stubborn rock.
But hear and mark me well. Should'st thou prevail,
Assisted by a Power divine, to slay
The haughty suitors, I will then, myself,
Give thee to know of all the female train
Who have dishonour'd thee, and who respect.

615

To whom Ulysses, ever-wise, replied.
My nurse, it were superfluous; spare thy tongue
That needless task. I can distinguish well
Myself, between them, and shall know them all;
But hold thy peace. Hush! leave it with the Gods.

620

So he; then went the ancient matron forth,
That she might serve him with a second bath,
For the whole first was spilt. Thus, laved at length,
And smooth'd with oil, Ulysses nearer pull'd
His seat toward the glowing hearth to enjoy
More warmth, and drew his tatters o'er the scar.
Then, prudent, thus Penelope began.

630

One question, stranger, I shall yet propound,
Though brief, for soon the hour of soft repose,
Grateful to all, and even to the sad
Whom gentle sleep forsakes not, will arrive.
But heaven to me immeasurable woe
Assigns,—whose sole delight is to consume
My days in sighs, while here retired I sit,
Watching my maidens' labours and my own;
But (night return'd, and all to bed retired)
I press mine also, yet with deep regret
And anguish lacerated, even there. 635

As when at spring's first entrance, her sweet song
The azure-crested nightingale renewes,
Daughter of Pandarus; within the grove's
Thick foliage perch'd, she pours her echoing voice,
Now deep, now clear, still varying the strain
With which she mourns her Itylus, her son
By royal Zethus, whom she, erring, slew,⁴
So also I, by soul-distressing doubts
Toss'd ever, muse if I shall here remain
A faithful guardian of my son's affairs, 655
My husband's bed respecting, and not less
My own fair fame, or whether I shall him
Of all my suitors follow to his home
Who noblest seems, and offers richest dower.
My son while he was infant yet, and own'd
An infant's mind, could never give consent
That I should wed and leave him; but, at length,
Since he hath reach'd the stature of a man,
He wishes my departure hence, the waste
Viewing indignant by the suitors made. 660

But I have dream'd. Hear, and expound my dream.
My geese are twenty, which within my walls
I feed with sodden wheat; they serve to amuse
Sometimes my sorrow. From the mountains came
An eagle, huge, hook-beak'd, brake all their necks, 670

⁴ She intended to slay the son of her husband's brother Amphion, incited to it by envy of his wife, who had six children, while herself had only two, but through mistake she slew her own son Itylus, and for her punishment was transformed by Jupiter into a nightingale.

And slew them; scatter'd on the palace-floor
 They lay, and he soar'd swift into the skies.
 Dream only as it was, I wept aloud,
 Till all my maidens, gather'd by my voice,
 Arriving, found me weeping still, and still
 Complaining, that the eagle had at once
 Slain all my geese. But, to the palace-roof
 Stooping again, he sat, and with a voice
 Of human sound, forbad my tears, and said—

675

Courage! O daughter of the far-renown'd
 Icarius! no vain dream thou hast beheld,
 But, in thy sleep, a truth. The slaughter'd geese
 Denote thy suitors. I who have appear'd
 An eagle in thy sight, am yet indeed
 Thy husband, who have now, at last, return'd,
 Death, horrid death designing for them all.

680

685

He said; then waking at the voice, I cast
 An anxious look around, and saw my geese
 Beside their tray, all feeding as before.

Her then Ulysses answer'd, ever-wise.
 O Queen! it is not possible to miss
 Thy dream's plain import, since Ulysses' self
 Hath told thee the event; thy suitors all
 Must perish; not one suitor shall escape.

690

To whom Penelope discreet replied.
 Dreams are inexplicable, O my guest!
 And oft-times mere delusions, that receive
 No just accomplishment. There are two gates⁵
 Through which the fleeting phantoms pass; of horn
 Is one, and one of ivory. Such dreams
 As through the thin-leaf'd ivory portal come,
 Soothe, but perform not, uttering empty sounds;
 But such as through the polish'd horn escape,
 If haply seen by any mortal eye,
 Prove faithful witnesses, and are fulfill'd.
 But through those gates my wondrous dream, I think,

695

700

705

⁵ The difference of the two substances may perhaps serve to account for the preference given in this case to the gate of horn; horn being transparent, and as such emblematical of truth; while ivory, from its whiteness, promises light, but is, in fact, opaque. F.

Came not ; thrice welcome were it else to me
 And to my son. Now mark my words ; attend.
 This is the hated morn that from the house
 Removes me of Ulysses. I shall fix, 710
 This day, the rings for trial to them all
 Of archership ; Ulysses' custom was
 To plant twelve spikes⁶, all regular arranged
 Like galley-props, and crested with a ring,
 Then standing far remote, true in his aim, 715
 He with his whizzing shaft would thrid them all.
 This is the contest in which now I mean
 To prove the suitors ; him, who with most ease
 Shall bend the bow, and shoot through all the rings,
 I follow, this dear mansion of my youth 720
 Leaving, so fair, so fill'd with every good,
 Though still to love it even in my dreams.
 Her answer'd then Ulysses, ever-wise.
 Consort revered of Laertiades !
 Postpone not this contention, but appoint 725
 Forthwith the trial ; for Ulysses here
 Will sure arrive, ere they (his polish'd bow
 Long tampering) shall prevail to stretch the nerve,
 And speed the arrow through the iron rings.
 To whom Penelope replied discreet. 730
 Would'st thou with thy sweet converse, O my guest !
 Here soothe me still, sleep ne'er should influence
 These eyes the while ; but always to resist
 Sleep's power is not for man, to whom the Gods
 Each circumstance of his condition here 735
 Fix universally. Myself will seek
 My own apartment at the palace-top,
 And there will lay me down on my sad couch,
 For such it hath been, and with tears of mine
 Ceaseless bedew'd, e'er since Ulysses went 740
 To that bad city, never to be named.

⁶ The translation here is somewhat pleonastic for the sake of perspicuity ; the original is clear in itself, but not to us who have no such practice. Twelve stakes were fixed in the earth, each having a ring at the top ; the order in which they stood was so exact, that an arrow sent with an even hand through the first ring, would pass them all.

There will I sleep ; but sleep thou here below,
Either, thyself, preparing on the ground
Thy couch, or on a couch by these prepared.

So saying, she to her splendid chamber thence
Retired, not sole, but by her female train
Attended ; there arrived, she wept her spouse,
Her loved Ulysses, till Minerva dropp'd
The balm of slumber on her weary lids.

BOOK XX.

A R G U M E N T.

Ulysses, doubting whether he shall destroy or not the women servants who commit lewdness with the suitors, resolves at length to spare them for the present. He asks an omen from Jupiter, and that he would grant him also to hear some propitious words from the lips of one in the family. His petitions are both answered. Preparation is made for the feast. Whilst the suitors sit at table, Pallas smites them with a horrid frenzy. Theoclymenus, observing the strange effects of it, prophesies their destruction, and they deride his prophecy.

BUT in the vestibule the Hero lay
 On a bull's hide undress'd, o'er which he spread
 The fleece of many a sheep slain by the Greeks,
 And, cover'd by the household's governess
 With a wide cloak, composed himself to rest. 5
 Yet slept he not, but meditating lay
 Woe to his enemies. Meantime the train
 Of women wonted to the suitors' arms,
 Issuing all mirth and laughter, in his soul
 A tempest raised of doubts, whether at once 10
 To slay, or to permit them yet to give
 Their lusty paramours one last embrace.
 As growls the mastiff standing on the start
 For battle, if a stranger's foot approach
 Her cubs new-whelp'd—so growl'd Ulysses' heart,
 While wonder fill'd him at their impious deeds. 15
 But, smiting on his breast, thus he reproved
 The mutinous inhabitant within.
 Heart! bear it. Worse than this thou didst endure
 When, uncontrollable by force of man, 20
 The Cyclops thy illustrious friends devour'd.
 Thy patience then fail'd not, till prudence found
 Deliverance for thee on the brink of fate.
 So disciplined the Hero his own heart,

Which, tractable, endured the rigorous curb,
And patient ; yet he turn'd from side to side.
As when some hungry swain turns oft a maw
Unctuous and savoury on the burning coals,
Quick expediting his desired repast,
So he from side to side roll'd, pondering deep
How likeliest with success he might assail
Those shameless suitors ; one to many opposed.
Then, sudden from the skies descending, came
Minerva in a female form ; her stand
Above his head she took, and thus she spake.

Why sleep'st thou not, unhappiest of mankind ?
Thou art at home ; here dwells thy wife, and here
Thy son ; a son, whom all night wish their own.

Then her Ulysses answer'd, ever-wise.
O Goddess ! true is all that thou hast said,
But, not without anxiety, I muse
How, single as I am, I shall assail
Those shameless suitors who frequent my courts
Daily, and always their whole multitude.
This weightier theme I meditate beside ;
Should I, with Jove's concurrence and with thine,
Prevail to slay them, how shall I escape,
Myself, at last ?¹ oh Goddess, weigh it well.

Him answer'd then Pallas cerulean-eyed.
Oh faithless man ! a man will in his friend
Confide, though mortal, and in valour less
And wisdom than himself ; but I who keep
Thee in all difficulties, am divine.

I tell thee plainly. Were we hemm'd around
By fifty troops of shouting warriors bent
To slay thee, thou should'st yet securely drive
The flocks away and cattle of them all.
But yield to sleep's soft influence ; for to lie
All night thus watchful, is, itself, distress.

Fear not. Deliverance waits, not far remote.

So saying, she o'er Ulysses' eyes diffused
Soft slumbers, and when sleep, that soothes the mind
And nerves the limbs afresh, had seized him once,
To the Olympian summit swift return'd.

¹ That is, how shall I escape the vengeance of their kindred ?

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But his chaste spouse awoke ; she weeping sat
On her soft couch, and noblest of her sex,
Satiate at length with tears, her prayer address'd
First to Diana of the Powers above.

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Diana, awful progeny of Jove !

I would that with a shaft this moment sped
Into my bosom, thou would'st here conclude
My mournful life ! or, oh that, as it flies,
Snatching me through the pathless air, a storm
Would whelm me deep in Ocean's restless tide !

70

So, when the Gods their parents had destroy'd,
Storms suddenly the beauteous daughters¹ snatch'd
Of Pandarus away ; them left forlorn
Venus with curds, with honey and with wine
Fed duly ; Juno gave them to surpass
All women in the charms of face and mind,
With graceful stature eminent the chaste
Diana bless'd them, and in works of art
Illustrious, Pallas taught them to excel.

75

But when the foam-sprung Goddess to the skies
A suitress went on their behalf, to obtain

80

Blest nuptials for them from the Thunderer Jove,
(For Jove the happiness, himself, appoints,
And the unhappiness of all below,)

Meantime, the Harpies ravishing away
Those virgins, gave them to the Furies three,

90

That they might serve them. O that me the Gods
Inhabiting Olympus so would hide

From human eyes for ever, or bright-hair'd
Diana pierce me with a shaft, that while
Ulysses yet engages all my thoughts,

95

My days concluded, I might 'scape the pain
Of gratifying some inferior Chief !

This is supportable, when (all the day
To sorrow given) the mourner sleeps at night ;

100

For sleep, when it hath once the eyelids veil'd,
All reminiscence blots of all alike,

Both good and ill ; but me the Gods afflict
Not seldom even in dreams, and at my side,

This night again, one lay resembling him ;

Such as my own Ulysses when he join'd
Achaia's warriors ; my exulting heart
No airy dream believed it, but a truth.

While thus she spake, in orient gold enthroned
Came forth the morn ; Ulysses, as she wept,
Heard plain her lamentation ; him that sound
Alarm'd ; he thought her present, and himself
Known to her. Gathering hastily the cloak
His covering, and the fleeces, them he placed
Together on a throne within the hall,
But bore the bull's-hide forth into the air.
Then, lifting high his hands to Jove, he pray'd.

Eternal Sire ! if over moist and dry
Ye have with good will sped me to my home
After much suffering, grant me from the lips
Of some domestic now awake, to hear
Words of propitious omen, and thyself
Vouchsafe me still some other sign abroad.

Such prayer he made, and Jove omniscient heard.
Sudden he thunder'd from the radiant heights
Olympian ; glad, Ulysses heard the sound.
A woman, next, a labourer at the mill
Hard by, where all the palace-mills were wrought,
Gave him the omen of propitious sound.
Twelve maidens, day by day, toil'd at the mills,
Meal grinding, some of barley, some of wheat,
Marrow of man.³ The rest (their portion ground)
All slept ; she only from her task as yet
Ceased not, for she was feeblest of them all ;
She rested on her mill, and thus pronounced
The happy omen by her Lord desired.

Jove, Father, Governor of heaven and earth !
Loud thou hast thunder'd from the starry skies
By no cloud veil'd ; a sign propitious, given
To whom I know not ; but oh grant the prayer
Of a poor bond-woman ! appoint their feast
This day, the last that in Ulysses' house
The suitors shall enjoy, for whom I drudge,
With aching heart and trembling knees their meal
Grinding continual. Feast they here no more !

³ μνελον ανδρων.

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She ended, and the listening Chief received
With equal joy both signs ; for well he hoped
That he should punish soon those guilty men.
And now the other maidens in the hall
Assembling, kindled on the hearth again
The unwearied blaze ; then, godlike from his couch
Arose Telemachus, and fresh-attired,
Athwart his shoulders his bright faulchion slung,
Bound his fair sandals to his feet, and took
His sturdy spear pointed with glittering brass ;
Advancing to the portal, there he stood,
And Euryclea thus, his nurse, bespake.

Nurse ! have ye with respectful notice served
Our guest ? or hath he found a sordid couch
Even where he might ? for, prudent though she be,
My mother, inattentive oft, the worse
Treats kindly, and the better sends away.

Whom Euryclea answer'd thus discreet.
Blame not, my son ! who merits not thy blame.
The guest sat drinking till he would no more,
And ate, till, question'd, he replied—Enough.
But when the hour of sleep call'd him to rest,
She gave commandment to her female train
To spread his couch. Yet he, like one forlorn,
And through despair, indifferent to himself,
Both bed and rugs refused, and in the porch
On skins of sheep and on an undress'd hide
Reposed, where we threw covering over him.

She ceased, and grasping his bright-headed spear,
Forth went the Prince attended, as he went,
By his fleet hounds ; to the assembled Greeks
In council with majestic gait he moved,
And Euryclea, daughter wise of Ops,
Pisenor's son, call'd to the serving-maids.

Haste ye ! be diligent ! sweep the palace-floor
And sprinkle it ; then give the sumptuous seats
Their purple coverings. Let others cleanse
With sponges all the tables, wash and rince
The beakers well, and goblets rich emboss'd ;
Run others to the fountain, and bring thence
Water with speed. The suitors will not long

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Be absent, but will early come to-day,
For this day is a public festival.⁴

So she ; whom all, obedient, heard ; forth went
Together, twenty to the crystal fount,
While in their several provinces the rest
Bestirr'd them brisk at home. Then enter'd all
The suitors, and began cleaving the wood.
Meantime, the women from the fountain came,
Whom soon the swine-herd follow'd, driving three
His fattest brawns ; them in the spacious court
He feeding left, and to Ulysses' side
Approaching, courteously bespeak the Chief.

Guest ! look the Grecians on thee with respect
At length, or still disdainful as before ?

Then answer thus Ulysses wise return'd.
Yes—and I would that vengeance from the Gods
Might pay their insolence, who in a house
Not theirs, dominion exercise, and plan
Unseemly projects, shameless as they are !

Thus they conferr'd ; and now Melanthius came,
The goat-herd, driving, with the aid of two
His fellow-swains, the fattest of his goats
To feast the suitors. In the sounding porch
The goats he tied, then, drawing near, in terms
Reproachful thus assail'd Ulysses' ear.

How, stranger ! perseverest thou, begging, still
To vex the suitors ? wilt thou not depart ?
Scarce shall we settle this dispute, I judge,
Till we have tasted each the other's fist ;
Thou art unreasonable thus to beg
Here always ;—have the Greeks no feasts beside ?

He spake, to whom Ulysses answer none
Return'd, but shook his brows, and silent framed
Terrible purposes. Then, third, approach'd
Chief o'er the herds, Philoetius ; fatted goats
He for the suitors brought, with which he drove
An heifer ; (ferry-men had pass'd them o'er,
Carriers of all who on their coast arrive ;)
He tied them in the sounding porch, then stood
Beside the swine-herd, to whom thus he said.

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⁴ The new moon.

Who is this guest Eumæus, here arrived
 So lately? from what nation hath he come?
 What parentage and country boasts the man?
 I pity him, whose figure seems to speak
 Royalty in him. Heaven will surely plunge
 The race of common wanderers deep in woe,
 If thus it destine even Kings to mourn.

He ceased; and, with his right hand, drawing nigh,
 Welcomed Ulysses, whom he thus bespake.

Hail venerable guest! and be thy lot
 Prosperous at least hereafter, who art held
 At present, in the bonds of numerous ills.
 Thou, Jupiter, of all the Gods, art most
 Severe, and sparest not to inflict distress
 Even on creatures from thyself derived.⁵

I had no sooner mark'd thee, than my eyes
 Swam, and the sweat gush'd from me at the thought
 Of dear Ulysses; for if yet he live
 And see the sun, such tatters, I suppose,
 He wears, a wanderer among human-kind.
 But if already with the dead he dwell
 In Pluto's drear abode, oh then, alas
 For kind Ulysses! who consign'd to me,
 While yet a boy, his Cephalenian herds,
 And they have now increased to such a store
 Innumerable of broad-fronted beeves,
 As only care like mine could have produced.
 These, by command of others, I transport
 For their regale, who neither heed his son,
 Nor tremble at the anger of the Gods,
 But long have wish'd ardently to divide
 And share the substance of our absent Lord.

Me therefore this thought occupies, and haunts
 My mind not seldom; while the heir survives
 It were no small offence to drive his herds
 Afar, and migrate to a foreign land;
 Yet here to dwell, suffering oppressive wrongs
 While I attend another's beeves, appears
 Still less supportable; and I had fled,
 And I had served some other mighty Chief

⁵ He is often called—πατημ αυδρων τε θεων τε.

Long since, (for patience fails me to endure
My present lot,) but that I cherish still
Some hope of my ill-fated Lord's return,
To rid his palace of these lawless guests.

To whom Ulysses, ever-wise, replied.

Herdsman ! since neither void of sense thou seem'st,
Nor yet dishonest, but myself am sure
That thou art owner of a mind discreet,
Hear therefore, for I swear ! bold I attest
Jove and this hospitable board, and these
The Lares⁶ of the noble Chief, whose hearth
Protects me now, that ere thy going hence,
Ulysses surely shall have reach'd his home,
And thou shalt see him, if thou wilt, thyself,
Slaying the suitors who now lord it here.

270

Him answer'd then the keeper of his beeves.
Oh stranger ! would but the Saturnian King
Perform that word, thou should'st be taught (thyself
Eye-witness of it) what an arm is mine.

280

Eumæus also every power of heaven
Entreated, that Ulysses might possess
His home again. Thus mutual they conferr'd.

285

Meantime, in conference close the suitors plann'd
Death for Telemachus ; but while they sat
Consulting, on their left the bird of Jove
An eagle soar'd, grasping a timorous dove.
Then thus Amphinomus the rest bespake.

290

Oh friends ! our consultation how to slay
Telemachus, will never smoothly run
To its effect ; but let us to the feast.

295

So spake Amphinomus, whose counsel pleased.
Then, all into the royal house repair'd,
And on the thrones and couches throwing off
Their mantles, slew the fatted goats, the brawns,
The sheep full-sized, and heifer of the herd.
The roasted entrails first they shared, then fill'd
The beakers, and the swine-herd placed the cups ;
Philætius, chief intendant of the beeves,
Served all with baskets elegant of bread,
While all their cups Melanthius charged with wine,

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⁶ Household Gods who presided over the hearth.

And they assail'd at once the ready feast.
 Meantime Telemachus, with forecast shrewd,
 Fast by the marble threshold, but within
 The spacious hall his father placed, to whom
 A sordid seat he gave and scanty board.

310

A portion of the entrails, next, he set
 Before him, fill'd a golden goblet high,
 And thus, in presence of them all, began.

There seated now, drink as the suitors drink.

I will, myself, their biting taunts forbid,

315

And violence. This edifice is mine,

Not public property ; my father first

Possess'd it, and my right from him descends.

Suitors ! control your tongues, nor with your hands

320

Offend, lest contest fierce and war ensue.

He ceased ; they gnawing, sat, their lips aghast
 With wonder that Telemachus in his speech
 Such boldness used. Then spake Eupithe's son,
 Antinoüs, and the assembly thus address'd.

Let pass, ye Greeks ! the language of the Prince,

325

Harsh as it is, and big with threats to us.

Had Jove permitted, his orations here,

Although thus eloquent, ere now had ceased.

So spake Antinoüs, whom Ulysses' son

Heard unconcern'd. And now the heralds came

330

In solemn pomp, conducting through the streets

A sacred hecatomb, when in the grove

Umbrageous of Apollo, King shaft-arm'd,

The assembled Grecians met. The savoury roast

Finish'd, and from the spits withdrawn, each shared

335

His portion of the noble feast, and such

As they enjoy'd themselves the attendants placed

Before Ulysses, for the Hero's son

Himself, Telemachus, had so enjoin'd.

But Pallas (that they might exasperate more

340

Ulysses) suffer'd not the suitor Chiefs

To banquet, guiltless of heart-piercing scoffs

Malign. There was a certain suitor named

Ctesippus, born in Samos ; base of mind

Was he and profligate, but in the wealth

345

Confiding of his father, woo'd the wife

Of long-exiled Ulysses. From his seat
The haughty suitors thus that man address'd.

Ye noble suitors, I would speak ; attend !
The guest is served ; he hath already shared
Equal with us ; nor less the laws demand
Of hospitality ; for neither just
It were nor decent, that a guest, received
Here by Telemachus, should be denied
His portion of the feast. Come then—myself
Will give to him that he may also give
To her who laved him in the bath, or else
To whatsoever menial here he will.

So saying, he from a basket near at hand
Heaved an ox-foot, and with a vigorous arm
Hurl'd it. Ulysses gently bow'd his head,
Shunning the blow, but gratified his just
Resentment with a broad sardonic smile⁷
Of dread significance. He smote the wall.
Then thus Telemachus rebuked the deed.

Ctesippus, thou art fortunate ; the bone
Struck not the stranger, for he shunn'd the blow ;
Else, I had surely thrust my glittering lance
Right through thee ; then, no hymeneal rites
Of thine should have employ'd thy father here,
But thy funereal. No man therefore treat
Me with indignity within these walls,
For though of late a child, I can discern
Now, and distinguish between good and ill.

Suffice it that we patiently endure
To be spectators daily of our sheep
Slaughter'd, our bread consumed, our stores of wine
Wasted ; for what can one to all opposed ?

Come then—persist no longer in offence
And hostile hate of me ; or if ye wish
To slay me, pause not. It were better far
To die, and I had rather much be slain,
Than thus to witness your atrocious deeds
Day after day ; to see our guests abused,
With blows insulted, and the women dragg'd
With a licentious violence obscene

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⁷ A smile of displeasure.

From side to side of all this fair abode.

He said, and all sat silent, till at length
Thus Agelaüs spake, Diastor's son.

My friends ! let none with contradiction thwart 390
And rude reply, words rational and just ;

Assault no more the stranger, nor of all
The servants of renown'd Ulysses here

Harm any. My advice, both to the Queen
And to Telemachus, shall gentle be, 395

May it but please them. While the hope survived
Within your bosoms of the safe return

Of wise Ulysses to his native isle,
So long good reason was that she should use

Delay, and hold our wooing in suspense ; 400
For had Ulysses come, that course had proved

Wisest and best ; but that he comes no more
Appears now manifest. Thou, therefore, Prince !

Seeking thy mother, counsel her to wed
The noblest, and who offers richest dower, 405

That thou, for thy peculiar, may'st enjoy
Thy own inheritance in peace and ease,

And she, departing, find another home.

To whom Telemachus discreet, replied.

I swear by Jove, and by my father's woes, 410
Who either hath deceased far from his home,

Or lives a wanderer, that I interpose
No hindrance to her nuptials. Let her wed

Who offers most, and even whom she will.

But to dismiss her rudely were a deed
Unfilial.—That I dare not ;—God forbid ! 415

So spake Telemachus. Then Pallas struck
The suitors with delirium ; wide they stretch'd

Their jaws with spontaneous laughter loud ;
Their meat dripp'd blood ; tears fill'd their eyes, and dire 420

Presages of approaching woe, their hearts.

Then thus the prophet Theoclymenus.⁸

Ah miserable men ! what curse is this
That takes you now ? night wraps itself around

Your faces, bodies, limbs ; the palace shakes 425

⁸ Who had sought refuge in the ship of Telemachus when he left Sparta, and came with him to Ithaca.

With peals of groans—and oh, what floods ye weep !
 I see the walls and arches dappled thick
 With gore ; the vestibule is throng'd, the court
 On all sides throng'd with apparitions grim
 Of slaughter'd men sinking into the gloom
 Of Erebus ; the sun is blotted out
 From heaven, and midnight whelms you premature.

He said, they hearing laugh'd ; and thus the son
 Of Polybus, Eurymachus replied.

This wanderer from a distant shore hath left
 His wits behind. Hoa there ! conduct him hence
 Into the forum ; since he dreams it night
 Already, teach him there that it is day.

Then answer'd godlike Theoclymenus.
 I have no need, Eurymachus, of guides
 To lead me hence, for I have eyes and ears,
 The use of both my feet, and of a mind
 In no respect irrational or wild.
 These shall conduct me forth, for well I know
 That evil threatens you, such too as none
 Shall 'scape of all the suitors, whose delight
 Is to insult the unoffending guest
 Received beneath this hospitable roof.

He said, and, issuing from the palace, sought
 Piræus' house, who gladly welcomed him.
 Then all the suitors on each other cast
 A look significant, and, to provoke
 Telemachus the more, fleer'd at his guests.
 Of whom a youth thus, insolent, began.

No living wight, Telemachus, had e'er
 Guests such as thine. Witness, we know not who,
 This hungry vagabond, whose means of life
 Are none, and who hath neither skill nor force
 To earn them, a mere burthen on the ground.
 Witness the other also, who upstarts
 A prophet suddenly. Take my advice ;
 I counsel wisely ; send them both on board
 Some gallant bark to Sicily for sale ;
 Thus shall they somewhat profit thee at last.

So spake the suitors, whom Telemachus
 Heard unconcern'd, and silent, look'd and look'd

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Toward his father, watching still the time
When he should punish that licentious throng.
Meantime, Icarius' daughter, who had placed
Her splendid seat opposite, heard distinct
Their taunting speeches. They, with noisy mirth,
Feasted deliciously, for they had slain
Many a fat victim; but a sadder feast
Than soon the Goddess and the warrior Chief
Should furnish for them, none shall ever share,
Of which their crimes had furnish'd first the cause.

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BOOK XXI.

A R G U M E N T.

Penelope proposes to the suitors a contest with the bow, herself the prize. They prove unable to bend the bow; when Ulysses, having with some difficulty possessed himself of it, manages it with the utmost ease, and dispatches his arrow through twelve rings erected for the trial.

MINERVA now, Goddess coerulean-eyed,
Prompted Icarius' daughter, the discreet
Penelope, with bow and rings to prove
Her suitors in Ulysses' courts, a game
Terrible in conclusion to them all. 5
First, taking in her hand the brazen key
Well-forged, and fitted with an ivory grasp,
Attended by the women of her train
She sought her inmost chamber, the recess
In which she kept the treasures of her Lord, 10
His brass, his gold, and steel elaborate.
Here lay his stubborn bow, and quiver fill'd
With numerous shafts, a fatal store. That bow
He had received and quiver from the hand
Of godlike Iphitus Eurytides, 15
Whom, in Messenia,¹ in the house he met
Of brave Orsilochus. Ulysses came
Demanding payment of arrearage due
From all that land; for a Messenian fleet
Had borne from Ithaca three hundred sheep, 20
With all their shepherds; for which cause, ere yet
Adult, he voyaged to that distant shore,
Deputed by his sire, and by the Chiefs
Of Ithaca, to make the just demand.
But Iphitus had thither come to seek 25
Twelve mares and twelve mule colts which he had lost,

¹ A province of Laconia.

A search that cost him soon a bloody death.
 For, coming to the house of Hercules,
 The valiant task-performing son of Jove,
 He perish'd there, slain by his cruel host, 30
 Who, heedless of heaven's wrath, and of the rights
 Of his own board, first fed, then slaughter'd him ;
 For in *his* house the mares and colts were hidden.
 He, therefore, occupied in that concern,
 Meeting Ulysses there, gave him the bow 35
 Which, erst, huge Eurytus had borne, and which
 Himself had from his dying sire received.
 Ulysses, in return, on him bestow'd
 A spear and sword, pledges of future love
 And hospitality ; but never more 40
 They met each other at the friendly board,
 For, ere that hour arrived, the son of Jove
 Slew his own guest, the godlike Iphitus.
 Thus came the bow into Ulysses' hands,
 Which never in his gallant barks he bore 45
 To battle with him, (though he used it oft
 In times of peace,) but left it safely stored
 At home, a dear memorial of his friend.
 Soon as, divinest of her sex, arrived
 At that same chamber, with her foot she press'd 50
 The oaken threshold bright, on which the hand
 Of no mean architect had stretch'd the line,
 Who had erected also on each side
 The posts on which the splendid portal hung,
 She loosed the ring and brace, then introduced 55
 The key, and aiming at them from without,²
 Struck back the bolts. The portals, at that stroke,
 Sent forth a tone deep as the pastured bull's,
 And flew wide open. She ascending next
 The elevated floor on which the chests 60
 That held her own fragrant apparel stood,
 With lifted hand aloft took down the bow
 In its embroider'd bow-case safe enclosed.
 Then sitting there, she laid it on her knees,

² The reader will of course observe, that the whole of this process implies a sort of mechanism very different from that with which we are acquainted.—The translation, I believe, is exact.

Weeping aloud, and drew it from the case.
 Thus weeping over it long time she sat,
 Till satiate, at the last, with grief and tears,
 Descending by the palace steps she sought
 Again the haughty suitors, with the bow
 Elastic, and the quiver in her hand
 Replete with pointed shafts, a deadly store.
 Her maidens, as she went, bore after her
 A coffer fill'd with prizes by her Lord,
 Much brass and steel ; and when at length she came,
 Loveliest of women, where the suitors sat,
 Between the pillars of the stately dome
 Pausing, before her beauteous face she held
 Her lucid veil, and by two matrons chaste
 Supported, the assembly thus address'd.

Ye noble suitors, hear, who rudely haunt
 This palace of a Chief long absent hence,
 Whose substance ye have now long time consumed,
 Nor palliative hâve yet contrived, or could,
 Save your ambition to make me a bride,—
 Attend this game to which I call you forth.
 Now, suitors ! prove yourselves with this huge bow
 Of wide-renown'd Ulysses ; he who draws
 Easiest the bow, and who his arrow sends
 Through twice six rings, he takes me to his home,
 And I must leave this mansion of my youth
 Plenteous, magnificent, which doubtless oft
 I shall remember even in my dreams.

So saying, she bade Eumæus lay the bow
 Before them, and the twice six rings of steel.
 He wept, received them, and obey'd ; nor wept
 The herdsman less, seeing the bow which erst
 His Lord had occupied ; when at their tears
 Indignant, thus, Antinoüs began.

Ye rural drones, whose purblind eyes see not
 Beyond the present hour, egregious fools !
 Why weeping trouble ye the Queen, too much
 Before afflicted for her husband lost ?
 Either partake the banquet silently,
 Or else go weep abroad, leaving the bow,
 That stubborn test, to us ; for none, I judge,

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None here shall bend this polish'd bow with ease,
 Since in this whole assembly I discern
 None like Ulysses, whom myself have seen
 And recollect, though I was then a boy.

He said, but in his heart meantime the hope 110
 Cherish'd, that he should bend, himself, the bow,
 And pass the rings ; yet was he destined first
 Of all that company to taste the steel
 Of brave Ulysses' shaft, whom in that house
 He had so oft dishonour'd, and had urged 115
 So oft all others to the like offence.
 Amidst them then the sacred might arose
 Of young Telemachus, who thus began.

Saturnian Jove questionless hath deprived
 Me of all reason. My own mother, famed 120
 For wisdom as she is, makes known to all
 Her purpose to abandon this abode
 And follow a new mate, while heedless I
 Trifle and laugh as I were still a child.
 But come, ye suitors ! since the prize is such, 125
 A woman, like to whom none can be found
 This day in all Achaia ; on the shores
 Of sacred Pylus ; in the cities proud
 Of Argos or Mycenæ ; or even here
 In Ithaca ; or yet within the walls 130

Of black Epirus ; and since this yourselves
 Know also, wherefore should I speak her praise ?
 Come then, delay not, waste not time in vain
 Excuses, turn not from the proof, but bend
 The bow, that thus the issue may be known. 135
 I also will, myself, that task essay ;
 And should I bend the bow, and pass the rings,
 Then shall not my illustrious mother leave
 Her son forlorn, forsaking this abode
 To follow a new spouse, while I remain 140
 Disconsolate, although of age to bear,
 Successful as my sire, the prize away.

So saying, he started from his seat, cast off
 His purple cloak, and laid his sword aside,
 Then fix'd, himself, the rings, furrowing the earth 145
 By line, and opening one long trench for all,

And stamping close the glebe. Amazement seized
 All present, seeing with how prompt a skill
 He executed, though untaught, his task.
 Then hastening to the portal, there he stood. 150
 Thrice, struggling, he essay'd to bend the bow,
 And thrice desisted, hoping still to draw
 The bow-string home, and shoot through all the rings.³
 And now the fourth time striving with full force
 He had prevail'd to string it, but his sire 155
 Forbad his eager efforts by a sign.
 Then thus the royal youth to all around.
 Gods! either I shall prove of little force
 Hereafter, and for manly feats unapt,
 Or I am yet too young, and have not strength
 To quell the aggressor's contumely. But come—
 (For ye have strength surpassing mine,) try ye 160
 The bow, and bring this contest to an end.
 He ceased, and set the bow down on the floor,
 Reclining it against the pannels smooth
 That lined the wall; the arrow next he placed,
 Leaning against the bow's bright-polish'd horn,
 And to the seat, whence he had risen, return'd.
 Then thus Eupithe's son, Antinoüs spake. 165
 My friends! come forth successive from the right,⁴
 Where he who ministers the cup begins.
 So spake Antinoüs, and his counsel pleased.
 Then, first, Leiodes, Ḡnop's son, arose.
 He was their soothsayer, and ever sat
 Beside the beaker, inmost of them all. 175
 To him alone of all, licentious deeds
 Were odious, and with indignation fired,
 He witness'd the excesses of the rest.
 He then took foremost up the shaft and bow,
 And, station'd at the portal, strove to bend
 But bent it not, fatiguing, first, his hands 180
 Delicate and uncustom'd to the toil.

³ This first attempt of Telemachus and the suitors was not an attempt to shoot, but to lodge the bow-string on the opposite horn, the bow having been released at one end, and slackened while it was laid by.

⁴ Antinoüs prescribes to them this manner of rising to the trial for the good omen's sake, the left hand being held unpropitious.

He ceased, and the assembly thus bespake.

My friends, I speed not; let another try;
For many Princes shall this bow of life
Bereave, since death more eligible seems,
Far more, than loss of her, for whom we meet
Continual here, expecting still the prize.
Some suitor haply at this moment hopes
That he shall wed whom long he hath desired,
Ulysses' wife, Penelope; let him
Essay the bow, and trial made, address.
His spousal offers to some other fair
Among the long-stoled Princesses of Greece,
This Princess leaving his, whose proffer'd gifts
Shall please her most, and whom the Fates ordain.

He said, and set the bow down on the floor,
Reclining it against the pannels smooth
That lined the wall; the arrow, next, he placed,
Leaning against the bow's bright-polish'd horu,
And to the seat whence he had risen return'd.
Then him Antinoüs, angry, thus reproved.

What word, Leiodes, grating to our ears
Hath 'scaped thy lips? I hear it with disdain.
Shall this bow fatal prove to many a Prince,
Because thou hast thyself too feeble proved
To bend it? no. Thou wast not born to bend
The unpliant bow, or to direct the shaft,
But here are nobler who shall soon prevail.

He said, and to Melanthius gave command,
The goat-herd. Hence, Melanthius, kindle fire;
Beside it place, with fleeces spread, a form
Of length commodious; from within procure
A large round cake of suet next, with which
When we have chafed and suppled the tough bow
Before the fire, we will again essay
To bend it, and decide the doubtful strife.

He ended, and Melanthius, kindling fire,
Beside it placed, with fleeces spread, a form
Of length commodious; next he brought a cake
Ample and round of suet from within,
With which they chafed the bow, then tried again
To bend, but bent it not; superior strength

To theirs that task required. Yet two, the rest
In force surpassing, made no trial yet,
Antinoüs, and Eurymachus the brave.

225

Then went the herdsman and the swine-herd forth
Together; after whom, the glorious Chief
Himself the house left also, and when all
Without the court had met, with gentle speech
Ulysses then the faithful pair address'd.

230

Herdsman! and thou, Eumæus! shall I keep
A certain secret close, or shall I speak
Outright? my spirit prompts me, and I will.
What welcome should Ulysses at your hands
Receive, arriving suddenly at home,
Some God his guide? would ye the suitors aid,
Or would ye aid Ulysses? answer true.

235

Then thus the chief intendant of his herds.
Would Jove but grant me my desire, to see
Once more the Hero, and would some kind Power
Restore him, I would show thee soon an arm
Strenuous to serve him, and a dauntless heart.

240

Eumæus also fervently implored
The Gods in prayer, that they would render back
Ulysses to his home. He then, convinced
Of their unfeigning honesty, began.

245

Behold him! I am he myself, arrived
After long sufferings in the twentieth year!
I know how welcome to yourselves alone
Of all my train I come, for I have heard
None others praying for my safe return.
I therefore tell you truth; should heaven subdue
The suitors under me, ye shall receive
Each at my hands a bride, with lands and house
Near to my own, and ye shall be thenceforth
Dear friends and brothers of the Prince my son.
Lo! also this indisputable proof
That ye may know and trust me. View it here.
It is the scar which in Parnassus erst
(Where with the sons I hunted of renown'd
Autolycus) I from a boar received.

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So saying, he stripp'd his tatters, and unveil'd
The whole broad scar; then soon as they had seen

And surely recognized the mark, each cast
His arms around Ulysses, wept, embraced,
And press'd him to his bosom, kissing oft
His brows and shoulders, who as oft their hands
And foreheads kiss'd, nor had the setting sun
Beheld them satisfied, but that himself
Ulysses thus admonished them, and said. 265

Cease now from tears, lest any, coming forth,
Mark and report them to our foes within.
Now to the hall again, but one by one,
Not all at once, I foremost, then yourselves, 275
And this shall be the sign. Full well I know
That all unanimous, they will oppose
Delivery of the bow and shafts to me ;
But thou, (proceeding with it to my seat)
Eumæus, noble friend ! shalt give the bow 280
Into my grasp ; then bid the women close
The massy doors, and should they hear a groan
Or other noise made by the Princes shut
Within the hall, let none set step abroad,
But all work silent. Be the palace-door 285
Thy charge, my good Philctetius ! key it fast
Without a moment's pause, and fix the brace.⁵

He ended, and returning to the hall,
Resumed his seat ; nor stay'd his servants long
Without, but follow'd their illustrious Lord. 290
Eurymachus was busily employ'd
Turning the bow, and chafing it before
The sprightly blaze, but after all could find
No Power to bend it. Disappointment wrung
A groan from his proud heart, and thus he said. 295

Alas ! not only for myself I grieve,
But grieve for all. Nor though I mourn the loss
Of such a bride, mourn I that loss alone,
(For lovely Grecians may be found no few
In Ithaca, and in the neighbour isles,) 300
But should we so inferior prove at last
To brave Ulysses, that no force of ours
Can bend his bow, we are for ever shamed.

⁵ The *δεσμὸς* seems to have been a strap designed to close the only aperture by which the bolt could be displaced, and the door opened.

To whom Antinoüs, thus, Eupitheüs' son.
 Not so ; (as even thou art well-assured
 Thysel, Eurymachus !) but Phœbus claims
 This day his own. Who then, on such a day,
 Would strive to bend it ? Let it rather rest.
 And should we leave the rings where now they stand,
 I trust that none entering Ulysses' house
 Will dare displace them. Cup-bearer, attend !
 Serve all with wine, that, first libation made,
 We may religiously lay down the bow.
 Command ye too Melanthius, that he drive
 Hither the fairest goats of all his flocks
 At dawn of day, that burning first the thighs
 To the ethereal archer, we may make
 New trial, and decide at length the strife.

So spake Antinoüs, and his counsel pleased.
 The heralds then pour'd water on their hands,
 While youths crown'd high the goblets which they bore
 From right to left, distributing to all.
 When each had made libation, and had drunk
 Till well sufficed, then, artful to effect.
 His shrewd designs, Ulysses thus began.

Hear, O ye suitors of the illustrious Queen,
 My bosom's dictates. But I shall entreat
 Chiefly Eurymachus and the godlike youth
 Antinoüs, whose advice is wisely given.

Tamper no longer with the bow, but leave
 The matter with the Gods, who shall decide
 The strife to-morrow, favouring whom they will.
 Meantime, grant me the polish'd bow, that I
 May trial make among you of my force,
 If I retain it still in like degree
 As erst, or whether wandering and defect
 Of nourishment have worn it all away.

He said, whom they with indignation heard
 Extreme, alarm'd lest he should bend the bow,
 And sternly thus Antinoüs replied.

Desperate vagabond ! ah wretch deprived
 Of reason utterly ! art not content ?
 Esteem'st it not distinction proud enough
 To feast with us the nobles of the land ?

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None robs thee of thy share, thou witnessest
Our whole discourse, which, save thyself alone,
No needy vagrant is allow'd to hear. 345

Thou art befool'd by wine, as many have been,
Wide-throated drinkers, unrestrain'd by rule.

Wine in the mansion of the mighty Chief
Pirithoüs, made the valiant Centaur mad
Eurytion, at the Lapithæan feast.⁶ 350

He drank to drunkenness, and being drunk,
Committed great enormities beneath
Pirithoüs' roof, and such as fill'd with rage
The Hero-guests, who therefore by his feet
Dragg'd him right through the vestibule, amerced
Of nose and ears, and he departed thence
Provoked to frenzy by that foul disgrace,
Whence war between the human kind arose 360

And the bold Centaurs—but he first incurred
By his ebriety that mulct severe.
Great evil also if thou bend the bow,
To thee I prophesy ; for thou shalt find
Advocate or protector none in all
This people, but we will dispatch thee hence 365

Incontinent on board a sable bark
To Echetus, the scourge of human kind,
From whom is no escape. Drink then in peace,
And contest shun with younger men than thou.
Him answer'd then Penelope discreet. 370

Antinoüs ! neither seemly were the deed
Nor just, to maim or harm whatever guest
Whom here arrived Telemachus receives.
Canst thou expect, that should he even prove
Stronger than ye, and bend the massy bow, 375

He will conduct me hence to his own home,
And make me his own bride ? No such design
His heart conceives, or hope ; nor let a dread
So vain the mind of any overcloud
Who banquets here, since it dishonours me. 380

⁶ When Pirithoüs, one of the Lapithæ, married Hippodamia, daughter of Adrastus, he invited the Centaurs to the wedding. The Centaurs, intoxicated with wine, attempted to ravish the wives of the Lapithæ, who, in resentment of that insult, slew them.

So she ; to whom Eurymachus replied,
Offspring of Polybus. O matchless Queen !
Icarius' prudent daughter ! none suspects
That thou wilt wed with him ; a mate so mean
Should ill become thee ; but we fear the tongues
Of either sex, lest some Achaian say
Hereafter, (one inferior far to us)
Ah ! how unworthy are they to compare
With him whose wife they seek ! to bend his bow
Pass'd all their power, yet this poor vagabond,
Arriving from what country none can tell,
Bent it with ease, and shot through all the rings.
So will they speak, and so shall we be shamed.

385

Then answer thus Penelope return'd.
No fair report, Eurymachus, attends
Their names or can, who, riotous as ye,
The house dishonour and consume the wealth
Of such a Chief. Why shame ye thus *yourselves* ?

395

The guest is of athletic frame, well form'd,
And large of limb ! he boasts him also sprung
From noble ancestry. Come then—consent—
Give him the bow, that we may see the proof ;
For thus I say, and thus will I perform ;
Sure as he bends it, and Apollo gives
To him that glory, tunic fair and cloak
Shall be his need from me, a javelin keen
To guard him against men and dogs, a sword
Of double edge, and sandals for his feet,
And I will send him whither most he would.

400

Her answer'd then prudent Telemachus.
Mother—the bow is mine ; and save myself,
No Greek hath right to give it, or refuse.
None who in rock-bound Ithaca possess
Dominion, none in the steed-pastured isles
Of Elis, if I chose to make the bow
His own for ever, should that choice control.
But thou into the house repairing, ply
Spindle and loom, thy province, and enjoin
Diligence to thy maidens ; for the bow
Is man's concern alone, and shall be mine
Especially, since I am master here.

405

410

415

420

She heard astonish'd, and the prudent speech
 Reposing of her son deep in her heart,
 Withdrew; then mounting with her female train
 To her superior chamber, there she wept
 Her lost Ulysses, till Minerva bathed
 With balmy dews of sleep her weary lids.
 And now the noble swine-herd bore the bow
 Toward Ulysses, but with one voice all
 The suitors, clamorous, reproved the deed,
 Of whom a youth thus insolent exclaim'd.

425

Thou clumsy swine-herd, whither bear'st the bow,
 Delirious wretch? the hounds that thou hast train'd
 Shall eat thee at thy solitary home
 Ere long, let but Apollo prove, at last,
 Propitious to us, and the Powers of heaven.

430

So they, whom hearing he replaced the bow
 Where erst he stood, terrified at the sound
 Of such loud menaces; on the other side
 Telemachus as loud assail'd his ear.

435

Friend! forward with the bow; or soon repent
 That thou obey'dst the many. I will else
 With huge stones drive thee, younger as I am,
 Back to the field. My strength surpasses thine.
 I would to heaven that I in force excell'd
 As far, and prowess, every suitor here!
 So would I soon give rude dismission hence
 To some, who live but to imagine harm.

440

He ceased, whose words the suitors laughing heard,
 And for their sake, in part their wrath resign'd
 Against Telemachus; then through the hall
 Eumeus bore, and to Ulysses' hand
 Consign'd the bow; next summoning abroad
 The ancient nurse, he gave her thus in charge.

445

455

It is the pleasure of Telemachus,
 Sage Euryklea! that thou key secure
 The doors; and should ye hear perchance a groan
 Or other noise made by the Princes shut
 Within the hall, let none look curious forth,
 But each in quietness pursue her work.

460

So he; nor flew his words useless away,
 But she incontinent shut fast the doors.

Then noiseless sprang Philoetius forth, who closed
The portals also of the palace-court.

465

A ship-rope of Egyptian reed, it chanced
Lay in the vestibule; with that he braced
The doors securely, and re-entering fill'd
Again his seat, but watchful eyed his Lord.
He now assaying with his hand the bow,
Made curious trial of it every way,
And turn'd it on all sides, lest haply worms
Had in its master's absence drill'd the horn.
Then thus a suitor to his next remark'd.

470

He hath an eye methinks exactly skill'd
In bows, and steals them; or perhaps at home
Hath such himself, or feels a strong desire
To make them; so inquisitive the rogue,
Adept in mischief, shifts it to and fro!

475

To whom another insolent replied.

480

I wish him like prosperity in all
His efforts, as attends his efforts made
On this same bow, which he shall never bend.

So they; but when the wary Hero wise
Had made his hand familiar with the bow,
Poising it and examining—at once—
As when in harp and song adept, a bard
Unlabouring strains the chord to a new lyre,
The twisted entrails of a sheep below
With fingers nice inserting, and above,
With such facility Ulysses bent
His own huge bow, and with his right hand play'd
The nerve which in its quick vibration sang
Clear as the swallow's voice. Keen anguish seized
The suitors, wan grew every cheek, and Jove
Gave him his rolling thunder for a sign.

485

That omen, granted to him by the son
Of wily Saturn, with delight he heard.
He took a shaft that at the table side
Lay ready drawn; but in his quiver's womb
The rest yet slept, by those Achaians proud
To be, ere long, experienced. True he lodged
The arrow on the centre of the bow,
And, occupying still his seat, drew home

490

495

500

Nerve and notch'd arrow-head ; with steadfast sight 505
 He aim'd and sent it ; right through all the rings
 From first to last the steel-charged weapon flew
 Issuing beyond, and to his son he spake.

Thou need'st not blush, young Prince, to have received
 A guest like me ; neither my arrow swerved, 510
 Nor labour'd I long time to draw the bow ;
 My strength is unimpair'd, not such as these
 In scorn affirm it. But the waning day
 Calls us to supper,⁷ after which succeeds
 Jocund variety, the song, the harp, 515
 With all that heightens and adorns the feast.

He said, and with his brows gave him the sign.
 At once the son of the illustrious Chief
 Slung his keen faulchion, grasped his spear, and stood
 Arm'd bright for battle at his father's side. 520

⁷ This is an instance of the *Σαρδανίου μαλα τοιον* mentioned in Book XX. ; such as, perhaps, could not be easily paralleled. I question if there be a passage, either in ancient or modern tragedy, so truly terrible as this seeming levity of Ulysses, in the moment when he is going to begin the slaughter.

BOOK XXII.

ARGUMENT.

Ulysses, with some little assistance from Temelachus, Eumæus, and Philætius, slays all the suitors, and twelve of the female servants who had allowed themselves an illicit intercourse with them, are hanged. Melanthius also is punished with miserable mutilation.

THEN, girding up his rags, Ulysses sprang
With bow and full-charged quiver to the door ;
Loose on the broad stone at his feet he pour'd
His arrows, and the suitors thus bespake.

This prize, though difficult, hath been achieved. 5
Now for another mark which never man
Struck yet, but I will strike it if I may,
And if Apollo make that glory mine.

He said, and at Antinoüs aimed direct
A bitter shaft ; he, purposing to drink, 10
Both hands advanced toward the golden cup
Twin-ear'd, nor aught suspected death so nigh.
For who, at the full banquet, could suspect
That any single guest, however brave,
Should plan his death, and execute the blow ?

Yet him Ulysses with an arrow pierced
Full in the throat, and through his neck behind
Started the glittering point. Aslant he droop'd ;
Down fell the goblet, through his nostrils flew
The spouted blood, and spurning with his foot
The board, he spread his viands in the dust. 20
Confusion, when they saw Antinoüs fall'n,
Seized all the suitors ; from the thrones they sprang,
Flew every way, and on all sides explored
The palace-walls, but neither sturdy lance
As erst, nor buckler could they there discern.
Then, furious, to Ulysses thus they spake. 25

Thy arrow, stranger, was ill-aim'd ; a man
Is no just mark. Thou never shalt dispute
Prize more. Inevitable death is thine.
For thou hast slain a Prince noblest of all
In Ithaca, and shalt be vultures' food.

Various their judgments were, but none believed
That he had slain him wittingly, nor saw
The infatuate men fate hovering o'er them all.
Then thus Ulysses, louring dark, replied

O dogs ! not fearing aught my safe return
From Ilium, ye have shorn my substance close,
Lain with my women forcibly, and sought,
While yet I lived, to make my consort yours,
Heedless of the inhabitants of heaven
Alike, and of the just revenge of man.
But death is on the wing ; death for you all.

He said ; their cheeks all faded at the sound,
And each with sharpen'd eyes search'd every nook
For an escape from his impending doom,
Till thus, alone, Eurymachus replied.

If thou indeed art he, the mighty Chief
Of Ithaca return'd, thou hast rehearsed
With truth the crimes committed by the Greeks
Frequent, both in thy house and in thy field.
But he, already, who was cause of all,
Lies slain, Antinoüs ; he thy palace fill'd
With outrage, not solicitous so much
To win the fair Penelope, but thoughts
Far different framing, which Saturnian Jove
Hath baffled all ; to rule himself supreme
In noble Ithaca, when he had kill'd
By an insidious stratagem thy son.
But he is slain. Now therefore spare thy own,
Thy people ; public reparation due
Shall sure be thine, and to appease thy wrath
For all the waste that, eating, drinking here
We have committed, we will yield thee, each,
Full twenty beeves, gold paying thee beside
And brass, till joy shall fill thee at the sight,
However just thine anger was before.

To whom Ulysses, frowning stern, replied.

Eurymachus, would ye contribute each
 His whole inheritance, and other sums
 Still add beside, ye should not, even so,
 These hands of mine bribe to abstain from blood,
 Till every suitor suffer for his wrong.

70

Ye have your choice. Fight with me, or escape
 (Whoever may) the terrors of his fate,
 But ye all perish, if my thought be true.

75

He ended, they with trembling knees and hearts
 All heard, whom thus Eurymachus address'd.

To your defence, my friends ! for respite none
 Will he to his victorious hands afford,
 But arm'd with bow and quiver, will dispatch
 Shafts from the door till he have slain us all.
 Therefore to arms—draw each his sword—oppose
 The tables to his shafts, and all at once
 Rush on him ; that dislodging him at least
 From portal and from threshold, we may give
 The city on all sides a loud alarm,
 So shall this archer soon have shot his last.

80

Thus saying he drew his brazen faulchion keen
 Of double edge, and with a dreadful cry
 Sprang on him ; but Ulysses with a shaft,
 In that same moment through his bosom driven,
 Transfix'd his liver, and down dropp'd his sword.
 He, staggering around his table, fell
 Convolved in agonies, and overturn'd
 Both food and wine ; his forehead smote the floor ;
 Woe fill'd his heart, and spurning with his heels
 His vacant seat, he shook it till he died.

85

Then with his faulchion drawn, Amphinomus
 Advanced to drive Ulysses from the door,
 And fierce was his assault ; but, from behind,
 Telemachus between his shoulders fix'd
 A brazen lance, and urg'd it through his breast,
 Full on his front, with hideous sound, he fell.
 Leaving the weapon planted in his spine
 Back flew Telemachus, lest had he stood
 Drawing it forth, some enemy, perchance,
 Should either pierce him with a sudden thrust
 Oblique, or hew him with a downright edge.

95

100

105

Swift, therefore, to his father's side he ran,
Whom reaching, in wing'd accents thus he said. 110

My father ! I will now bring thee a shield,
An helmet, and two spears : I will enclose
Myself in armour also, and will give
Both to the herdsmen and Eumæus arms 115
Expedient now, and needful for us all.

To whom Ulysses, ever wise, replied.
Run ; fetch them, while I yet have arrows left,
Lest, single, I be justled from the door.

He said, and at his word, forth went the Prince, 120
Seeking the chamber where he had secured
The armour. Thence he took four shields, eight spears,
With four hair-crested helmets, charged with which
He hasted to his father's side again,
And, arming first himself, furnish'd with arms 125
His two attendants. Then, all clad alike
In splendid brass, beside the dauntless Chief
Ulysses, his auxiliars firm they stood.
He while a single arrow unemploy'd
Lay at his foot, right-aiming, ever pierced 130
Some suitor through, and heaps on heaps they fell.
But when his arrows fail'd the royal Chief,
His bow reclining at the portal's side
Against the palace-wall, he slung himself
A four-fold buckler on his arm, he fix'd 135
A casque whose crest waved awful o'er his brows
On his illustrious head, and fill'd his gripe
With two stout spears, well-headed both with brass.

There was a certain postern in the wall
At the gate-side,¹ the customary pass 140
Into a narrow street, but barr'd secure.
Ulysses bade his faithful swine-herd watch
That egress, station'd near it, for it own'd

¹ If the ancients found it difficult to ascertain clearly the situation of this *οπροθυρη*, well may we. The Translator has given it the position which to him appeared most probable.—There seem to have been two of these posterns, one leading to a part from which the town might be alarmed, the other to the chamber to which Telemachus went for armour. There was one, perhaps, on each side of the portal, and they appear to have been at some height above the floor.

One sole approach ; then Agelaüs loud
Exhorting all the suitors, thus exclaim'd.

145

Oh friends ! will none, ascending to the door
Of yonder postern, summon to our aid
The populace, and spread a wide alarm ?
So shall this archer soon have shot his last.

To whom the keeper of the goats replied
Melanthius. Agelaüs ! Prince renown'd !
That may not be. The postern and the gate²
Neighbour too near each other, and to force
The narrow egress were a vain attempt ;
One valiant man might thence repulse us all.
But come—myself will furnish you with arms
Fetch'd from above ; for there, as I suppose,
(And not elsewhere) Ulysses and his son
Have hidden them, and there they shall be found.

150

155

So spake Melanthius, and ascending sought
Ulysses' chambers through the winding stairs
And galleries of the house. Twelve bucklers thence
He took, as many spears, and helmets bright
As many, shagg'd with hair, then swift return'd
And gave them to his friends. Trembled the heart
Of brave Ulysses, and his knees, at sight
Of his opposers putting armour on,
And shaking each his spear ; arduous indeed
Now seem'd his task, and in wing'd accents brief
Thus to his son Telemachus he spake.

160

165

170

Either some woman of our train contrives
Hard battle for us, furnishing with arms
The suitors, or Melanthius arms them all.

Him answer'd then Telemachus discreet.

Father, this fault was mine, and be it charged
On none beside ; I left the chamber-door
Unbarr'd, which, more attentive than myself
Their spy perceived. But haste, Eumæus, shut
The chamber-door, observing well, the while,
If any woman of our train have done
This deed, or whether, as I more suspect,
Melanthius, Dolius' son, have given them arms.

175

180

Thus mutual they conferr'd ; meantime, again

² At which Ulysses stood.

Melanthius to the chamber flew, in quest
Of other arms. Eumæus, as he went,
Mark'd him, and to Ulysses thus he spake. 185

Laertes' noble son, for wiles renown'd !
Behold, the traitor, whom ourselves supposed,
Seeks yet again the chamber ! Tell me plain,
Shall I, should I superior prove in force, 190
Slay him, or shall I drag him thence to thee,
That he may suffer at thy hands the doom
Due to his treasons perpetrated oft
Against thee, here, even in thy own house ?

Then answer thus Ulysses shrewd return'd. 195
I, with Telemachus, will here immew
The lordly suitors close, rage as they may.
Ye two, the while, bind fast Melanthius' hands
And feet behind his back, then cast him bound
Into the chamber, and (the door secured) 200
Pass underneath his arms a double chain,
And by a pillar's top weigh him aloft
Till he approach the rafters, there to endure,
Living long time, the miseries he hath earned.

He spake ; they prompt obey'd ; together both
They sought the chamber, whom the wretch within
Heard not, exploring every nook for arms. 205
They watching stood the door, from which, at length,
Forth came Melanthius, bearing in one hand
A casque, and in the other a broad shield
Time-worn and chapp'd with drought, which in his youth
Warlike Laertes had been wont to bear. 210
Long time neglected it had lain, till age
Had loosed the sutures of its bands. At once
Both springing on him, seized and drew him in
Forcibly by his locks, then cast him down
Prone on the pavement, trembling at his fate. 215
With painful stricture of the cord his hands
They bound and feet together at his back,
As their illustrious master had enjoin'd,
Then weigh'd him with a double chain aloft,
By a tall pillar to the palace-roof, 220
And thus, deriding him, Eumæus spake.

Now, good Melanthius, on that fleecy bed

Reclined, as well befits thee, thou wilt watch
All night, nor when the golden dawn forsakes
The ocean stream, will she escape thine eye,
But thou wilt duly to the palace drive
The fattest goats, a banquet for thy friends.

225

So saying, he left him in his dreadful sling.
Then arming both, and barring fast the door,
They sought brave Laertiades again.

230

And now, courageous at the portal stood
Those four, by numbers in the interior house
Opposed of adversaries fierce in arms,
When Pallas, in the form and with the voice
Approach'd of Mentor, whom Laertes' son
Beheld, and joyful at the sight, exclaim'd.

235

Help, Mentor ! help—now recollect a friend
And benefactor, born when thou wast born.

240

So he, not unsuspicuous that he saw
Pallas, the heroine of heaven. Meantime
The suitors fill'd with menaces the dome,
And Agelaüs first, Damaster's son,
In accents harsh rebuked the Goddess thus.

245

Beware, oh Mentor ! that he lure thee not
To oppose the suitors and to aid himself,
For thus will we. Ulysses and his son
Both slain, in vengeance of thy purposed deeds
Against us, we will slay *thee* next, and thou
With thy own head shalt satisfy the wrong,
Your force thus quell'd in battle, all thy wealth
Whether in house or field, mingled with his,
We will confiscate, neither will we leave
Or son of thine, or daughter in thy house
Alive, nor shall thy virtuous consort more
Within the walls of Ithaca be seen.

250

255

He ended, and his words with wrath inflamed
Minerva's heart the more ; incensed, she turn'd
Toward Ulysses, whom she thus reproved.

260

Thou neither own'st the courage nor the force,
Ulysses now, which nine whole years thou show'dst
At Ilium, waging battle obstinate
For high-born Helen, and in horrid fight
Destroying multitudes, till thy advice

265

At last laid Priam's bulwark'd city low.
 Why, in possession of thy proper home
 And substance, mourn'st thou want of power to oppose
 The suitors? Stand beside me, mark my deeds,
 And thou shalt own Mentor Alcimides
 A valiant friend, and mindful of thy love.

270

She spake; nor made she victory as yet
 Entire his own, proving the valour, first,
 Both of the sire and of his glorious son,
 But springing in a swallow's form aloft,
 Perch'd on a rafter of the splendid roof.

275

Then, Agelaüs animated loud
 The suitors, whom Eurynomus also roused,
 Amphimedon, and Demoptolemus,
 And Polycitorides, Pisander named,
 And Polybus the brave; for noblest far
 Of all the suitor chiefs who now survived
 And fought for life were these. The bow had quell'd
 And shafts, in quick succession sent, the rest.
 Then Agelaüs thus harangued them all.

280

We soon shall tame, O friends, this warrior's might,
 Whom Mentor, after all his airy vaunts
 Hath left, and at the portal now remain
 Themselves alone. Dismiss not therefore, all,
 Your spears together, but with six alone
 Assail them first; Jove willing, we shall pierce
 Ulysses, and subduing him, shall slay
 With ease the rest; their force is safely scorn'd.

285

He ceased; and, as he bade, six hurl'd the spear
 Together; but Minerva gave them all
 A devious flight; one struck a column, one
 The planks of the broad portal, and a third
 Flung right his ashen beam ponderous with brass
 Against the wall.³ Then (every suitor's spear
 Eluded). thus Ulysses gave the word—

290

Now friends! I counsel you that ye dismiss
 Your spears at *them*, who not content with past
 Enormities, thirst also for our blood.

300

He said, and with unerring aim all threw

³ The deviation of three only is described, which must be understood therefore, as instances of the ill success of all.

Their glittering spears. Ulysses on the ground 305
 Stretch'd Demoptolemus ; Euryades
 Fell by Telemachus ; the swine-herd slew
 Eläthus, and the keeper of the beeves
 Pisander ; in one moment all alike
 Lay grinding with their teeth the dusty floor. 310
 Back flew the suitors to the farthest wall,
 On whom those valiant four advancing, each
 Recover'd quick his weapon from the dead.
 Then hurl'd the desperate suitors yet again
 Their glittering spears, but Pallas gave to each 315
 A frustrate course ; one struck a column, one
 The planks of the broad portal, and a third
 Flung full his ashen beam against the wall.
 Yet pierced Amphimedon the Prince's wrist,
 But slightly, a skin-wound, and o'er his shield 320
 Ctesippus reach'd the shoulder of the good
 Eumæus, but his glancing weapon swift
 O'erflew the mark, and fell. And now the four,
 Ulysses, dauntless Hero, and his friends
 All hurl'd their spears together in return. 325
 Himself Ulysses, city-waster Chief,
 Wounded Eurydamus ; Ulysses' son
 Amphimedon ; the swine-herd Polybus ;
 And in his breast the keeper of the beeves
 Ctesippus, glorying over whom, he cried. 330
 Oh son of Polythenses ! whose delight
 Hath been to taunt and jeer, never again
 Boast foolishly, but to the Gods commit
 Thy tongue, since they are mightier far than thou.
 Take this—a compensation for thy pledge 335
 Of hospitality, the huge ox-hoof,
 Which while he roam'd the palace, begging alms,
 Ulysses at thy bounteous hand received.
 So gloried he ; then grasping still his spear,
 Ulysses pierced Damastor's son, and next 340
 Telemachus, enforcing his long beam
 Sheer through his bowels and his back, transpierced
 Leiocritus ; he prostrate smote the floor.
 Then Pallas from the lofty roof held forth
 Her host-confounding Ægis o'er their heads, 345

Withering their souls with fear. They through the hall
 Fled, scatter'd as an herd, which rapid-wing'd
 The gad-fly dissipates, infester fell
 Of beeves, when vernal suns shine hot and long.
 But, as when bow-beak'd vultures crooked-claw'd 350
 Stoop from the mountains on the smaller fowl ;
 Terrified at the toils which spread the plain,
 The flock takes wing, they, darting from above,
 Strike, seize, and slay, resistance or escape
 Is none, the fowler's heart leaps with delight ;⁴ 355
 So they, pursuing through the spacious hall
 The suitors, smote them on all sides, their heads
 Sounded beneath the sword, with hideous groans
 The palace rang, and the floor foam'd with blood.
 Then flew Leiodes to Ulysses' knees, 360
 Which clasping, in wing'd accents thus he cried.

I clasp thy knees, Ulysses ! oh respect
 My suit, and spare me ! Never have I word
 Injurious spoken, or injurious deed
 Attempted 'gainst the women of thy house, 365
 But others, so transgressing, oft forbad.
 Yet they abstain'd not, and a dreadful fate
 Due to their wickedness have therefore found.
 But I, their soothsayer alone, must fall,
 Though unoffending ; such is the return 370
 By mortals made for benefits received !

To whom Ulysses, louring-dark, replied.
 Is that thy boast ? Hast thou indeed for these
 The seer's high office fill'd ? Then doubtless oft
 Thy prayer hath been that distant far might prove 375
 The day delectable of my return,
 And that my consort might thy own become
 To bear thee children ; wherefore thee I doom
 To a dire death which thou shalt not avoid.

So saying, he caught the faulchion from the floor 380

⁴ In this simile we seem to have a curious account of the ancient manner of fowling. The nets (for *νέφεα* is used in that sense by Aristophanes) were spread on a plain ; on an adjoining rising ground were stationed they who had charge of the vultures (such Homer calls them), which were trained to the sport. The alarm being given to the birds below, the vultures were loosed, when if any of them escaped their talons, the nets were ready to enclose them. See Eustathius. Dacier. Clarke.

Which Agelaüs had let fall, and smote
 Leiodes, while he kneel'd, athwart his neck
 So suddenly, that ere his tongue had ceased
 To plead for life, his head was in the dust.
 But Phemius, son of Terpius, bard divine,
 Who, through compulsion, with his song regaled
 The suitors, a like dreadful death escaped.
 Fast by the postern, harp in hand, he stood,
 Doubtful if, issuing, he should take his seat
 Beside the altar of Hercæan Jove,⁵

385

Where oft Ulysses offer'd, and his sire,
 Fat thighs of beeves, or whether he should haste,
 An earnest suppliant, to embrace his knees.
 That course, at length, most pleased him ; then between
 The beaker and an argent studded throne
 He grounded his sweet lyre, and seizing fast
 The Hero's knees, him suppliant thus address'd.

390

I clasp thy knees, Ulysses ! oh respect
 My suit, and spare me. Thou shalt not escape
 Regret thyself hereafter, if thou slay
 Me, charmer of the woes of Gods and men.
 Self-taught am I, and treasure in my mind
 Themes of all argument from heaven inspired,
 And I can sing to thee as to a God.

400

Ah then, behead me not ! Put even the wish
 Far from thee ! for thy own beloved son
 Can witness, that not drawn by choice, or driven
 By stress of want, resorting to thine house
 I have regaled these revellers so oft,
 But under force of mightier far than I.

405

So he ; whose words soon as the sacred might
 Heard of Telemachus, approaching quick
 His father, thus humane he interposed.

410

Hold—Harm not with the vengeful faulchion's edge
 This blameless man ; and we will also spare
 Medon the herald, who hath ever been
 A watchful guardian of my boyish years,
 Unless Philætius have already slain him,
 Or else Eumæus, or thyself, perchance,

415

⁵ So called because he was worshipped within the 'Eokos, or wall that surrounded the court.

Unconscious in the tumult of our foes.

420

He spake, whom Medon hearing (for he lay
Beneath a throne and in a new-cript hide
Enfolded, trembling with the dread of death,)
Sprang from his hiding-place, and casting off
The skin, flew to Telemachus, embraced
His knees, and in wing'd accents thus exclaim'd.

425

Prince ! I am here—oh pity me ! repress
Thine own, and pacify thy father's wrath,
That he destroy not me, through fierce revenge
Of their iniquities who have consumed
His wealth, and in their folly scorn'd his son.

430

To whom Ulysses, ever-wise, replied,
Smiling complacent. Fear not ; my own son
Hath pleaded for thee. Therefore (taught thyself
That truth) teach others the superior worth
Of benefits with injuries compared.
But go ye forth, thou and the sacred bard,
That ye may sit distant in yonder court
From all this carnage, while I give command
Myself concerning it, to those within.

435

410

He ceased ; they going forth, took each his seat
Beside Jove's altar, but with careful looks
Suspicious, dreading without cease the sword.
Meantime Ulysses search'd his hall in quest
Of living foes, if any still survived
Unpunish'd ; but he found them all alike
Weltering in dust and blood ; numerous they lay
Like fishes when they strew the sinuous shore
Of Ocean, from the grey gulf drawn aground
In nets of many a mesh ; they on the sands
Lie spread, athirst for the salt wave, till hot
The gazing sun dries all their life away ;
So lay the suitors heap'd, and thus at length
The prudent Chief gave order to his son.

445

450

Telemachus, bid Euryclea come
Quickly, the nurse, to whom I would impart
The purpose which now occupies me most.

455

He said ; obedient to his sire, the Prince
Smote on the door, and summon'd loud the nurse.

Arise, thou ancient governess of all

460

Our female menials, and come forth ; attend
My father ; he hath somewhat for thine ear.

So he ; nor flew his words useless away,
For throwing wide the portal, forth she came,
And by Telemachus conducted, found
Ere long Ulysses amid all the slain, 465
With blood defiled and dust ; dread he appear'd
As from the pastured ox newly-devour'd
The lion stalking back ; his ample chest
With gory drops and his broad cheeks are hung, 470
Tremendous spectacle ; such seem'd the Chief,
Blood-stain'd all over. She the carnage spread
On all sides seeing, and the pools of blood,
Felt impulse forcible to publish loud
That wondrous triumph ; but her lord repress'd 475
The shout of rapture ere it burst abroad,
And in wing'd accents thus his will enforced.

Silent exult, O ancient matron dear !
Shout not, be still. Unholy is the voice
Of loud thanksgiving over slaughter'd men. 480
Their own atrocious deeds and the Gods' will
Have slain all these ; for whether noble guest
Arrived or base, they scoff'd at all alike,
And for their wickedness have therefore died.
But say ; of my domestic women, who 485
Have scorn'd me, and whom find'st thou innocent ?

To whom good Euryclea thus replied.
My son ! I will declare the truth ; thou keep'st
Female domestics fifty in thy house,
Whom we have made intelligent to comb 490
The fleece, and to perform whatever task.
Of these, twice six have overpass'd the bounds
Of modesty, respecting neither me,
Nor yet the Queen ; and thy own son, adult
So lately, no permission had from her 495
To regulate the women of her train.
But I am gone, I fly with what hath pass'd
To the Queen's ear, who nought suspects, so sound
She sleeps, by some divinity composed.

Then answer thus Ulysses wise return'd.
Hush, and disturb her not. Go. Summon first 500

Those wantons, who have long deserved to die.

He ceased ; then issued forth the ancient dame
To summon those bad women, and, meantime,
Calling his son, Philcteius, and Eumæus,

Ulysses in wing'd accents thus began.

505

Bestir ye, and remove the dead ; command
Those women also to your help ; then cleanse
With bibulous sponges and with water all
The seats and tables ; when ye shall have thus

510

Set all in order, lead those women forth,

And in the centre of the spacious court,

Between the scullery and the outer-wall

Smite them with your broad faulchions till they lose

515

In death the memory of their secret loves

Indulged with wretches lawless as themselves.

He ended, and the damsels came at once
All forth, lamenting, and with tepid tears
Showering the ground ; with mutual labour, first,
Bearing the bodies forth into the court,

520

They lodged them in the portico ; meantime

Ulysses stern enjoin'd them haste, and urged

By sad necessity, they bore all out.

With sponges and with water next they cleansed

525

The thrones and tables, while Telemachus

Besom'd the floor, Eumæus in that work

Aiding him and the keeper of the beeves,

And those twelve damsels bearing forth the soil.

Thus order given to all within, they next

Led forth the women, whom they shut between

530

The scullery and the outer-wall in close

Durance, from which no prisoner could escape,

And thus Telemachus discreet began.

An honourable death is not for these

By my advice, who have so often heap'd

535

Reproach on mine and on my mother's head,

And held lewd commerce with the suitor-train.

He said, and noosing a strong galley-rope

To an huge column, led the cord around

The spacious dome, suspended so aloft

540

That none with quivering feet might reach the floor.

As when a flight of doves entering the copse,

Or broad-wing'd thrushes, strike against the net
 Within, ill rest entangled there they find,
 So they, suspended by the neck, expired
 All in one line together. Death abhor'd !
 With restless feet awhile they beat the air,
 Then ceased. And now through vestibule and hall
 They led Melanthius forth. With ruthless steel
 They pared away his ears and nose, pluck'd forth
 His parts of shame, destined to feed the dogs,
 And still indignant, lopp'd his hands and feet.
 Then, laving each his feet and hands, they sought
 Again Ulysses ; all their work was done,
 And thus the Chief to Euryclea spake.

545

Bright blast-averting sulphur, nurse, bring fire !
 That I may fumigate my walls ; then bid
 Penelope with her attendants down,
 And summon all the women of her train.

555

But Euryclea thus his nurse replied.
 My son ! thou hast well said ; yet will I first
 Serve thee with vest and mantle. Stand not here
 In thy own palace clothed with tatters foul
 And beggarly,—she will abhor the sight.

560

Then answer thus Ulysses wise return'd.
 Not so. Bring fire for fumigation first.

565

He said ; nor Euryclea his loved nurse
 Longer delay'd, but sulphur brought and fire,
 When he with purifying steams himself
 Visited every part, the banquet-room,
 The vestibule, the court. Ranging meantime
 His house magnificent, the matron call'd
 The women to attend their Lord in haste,
 And they attended, bearing each a torch.
 Then gather'd they around him all, sincere
 Welcoming his return ; with close embrace
 Enfolding him, each kiss'd his brows, and each
 His shoulders, and his hands lock'd fast in hers.
 He irresistible the impulse felt
 To sigh and weep, well recognizing all.

570

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580

BOOK XXIII.

ARGUMENT.

Ulysses, with some difficulty, convinces Penelope of his identity, who, at length, overcome by force of evidence, receives him to her arms with transport. He entertains her with a recital of his adventures, and in his narration the principal events of the poem are recapitulated. In the morning, Ulysses, Telemachus, the herdsman, and the swine-herd, depart into the country.

AND now, with exultation loud the nurse
 Again ascended, eager to apprise
 The Queen of her Ulysses' safe return ;
 Joy braced her knees, with nimbleness of youth
 She stepp'd, and at her ear, her thus bespake.

Arise, Penelope ! dear daughter, see
 With thy own eyes thy daily wish fulfill'd.
 Ulysses is arrived ; hath reach'd at last
 His native home, and all those suitors proud
 Hath slaughter'd, who his family distress'd,
 His substance wasted, and control'd his son.

To whom Penelope discreet replied.
 Dear nurse ! the Gods have surely taken away
 Thy judgment ; they transform the wise to fools,
 And fools conduct to wisdom, and have marr'd
 Thy intellect, who wast discreet before.
 Why wilt thou mock me, wretched as I am,
 With tales extravagant ? and why disturb
 Those slumbers sweet that seal'd so fast mine eyes ?
 For such sweet slumbers have I never known
 Since my Ulysses on his voyage sail'd
 To that bad city never to be named.
 Down instant to thy place again—begone—
 For had another of my maidens dared
 Disturb my sleep with tidings wild as these,

5

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25

I had dismiss'd her down into the house
More roughly ; but thine age excuses *thee*.

To whom the venerable matron thus.
I mock thee not, my child ; no—he is come—
Himself, Ulysses, even as I say, 30
That stranger, object of the scorn of all.
Telemachus well knew his sire arrived,
But prudently concealed the tidings, so
To ensure the more the suitors' punishment.

So Euryklea ; she transported heard, 35
And springing from the bed, wrapp'd in her arms
The ancient woman, shedding tears of joy,
And in wing'd accents ardent thus replied.

Ah then, dear nurse, inform me ! tell me true !
Hath he indeed arrived as thou declarest ? 40
How dared he to assail alone that band
Of shameless ones, for ever swarming here ?

Then Euryklea thus matron beloved.
I nothing saw or knew ; but only heard
Groans of the wounded ; in the interior house 45
We trembling sat, and every door was fast.
Thus all remain'd, till by his father sent,
Thy own son call'd me forth. Going I found
Ulysses compass'd by the slaughter'd dead.

They cover'd wide the pavement, heaps on heaps.
It would have cheer'd thy heart to have beheld 50
Thy husband lion-like with crimson stains
Of slaughter and of dust all dappled o'er.
Heap'd in the portal, at this moment, lie

Their bodies, and he fumigates meantime
The house with sulphur and with flames of fire,
And hath himself sent me to bid thee down.
Follow me then, that ye may give your hearts 55
To gladness both, for ye have much endured ;
But the event, so long your soul's desire,
Is come ; himself hath to his household Gods
Alive return'd, thee and his son he finds
Unharm'd and at your home, nor hath he left
Unpunish'd one of all his enemies.

Her answer'd then Penelope discreet. 60
Ah dearest nurse ! indulge not to excess

This dangerous triumph. Thou art well apprized
 How welcome his appearance here would prove
 To all, but chief to me and to his son,
 Fruit of our love. But these things are not so ; 70
 Some God, resentful of their evil deeds,
 And of their biting contumely severe,
 Hath slain those proud ; for whether noble guest
 Arrived or base, alike they scoff'd at all,
 And for their wickedness have therefore died. 75
 But my Ulysses distant far, I know,
 From Greece hath perish'd, and returns no more.

To whom thus Euryclea, nurse beloved.
 What word, my daughter, hath escaped thy lips,
 Who thus affirm'st thy husband, now within 80
 And at his own hearth-side, for ever lost ?
 Canst thou be thus incredulous ? Hear again—
 I give thee yet proof past dispute, his scar
 Imprinted by a wild-boar's ivory tusk.
 Laving him I remark'd it, and desired, 85
 Myself, to tell thee, but he, ever wise,
 Compressing with both hands my lips, forbad.
 Come, follow me. My life shall be the pledge.
 If I deceive thee, kill me as thou wilt.

To whom Penelope discreet replied. 90
 Ah, dearest nurse, sagacious as thou art,
 Thou little know'st to scan the counsels wise
 Of the eternal Gods. But let us seek
 My son, however, that I may behold
 The suitors dead, and him by whom they died. 95

So saying, she left her chamber, musing much,
 In her descent, whether to interrogate
 Her lord apart, or whether to imprint,
 At once, his hands with kisses and his brows.
 O'erpassing light the portal-step of stone, 100
 She enter'd. He sat opposite, illumed
 By the hearth's sprightly blaze, and close before
 A pillar of the dome, waiting with eyes
 Downcast, till viewing him, his noble spouse
 Should speak to him ; but she sat silent long, 105
 Her faculties in mute amazement held.
 By turns she rivetted her eyes on his,

And, seeing him so foul attired, by turns
She recognized him not ; then spake her son
Telemachus, and her silence thus reproved.

My mother ! ah my hapless and my most
Obdurate mother ! wherefore thus aloof
Shunn'st thou my father, neither at his side
Sitting affectionate, nor uttering word ?

Another wife lives not who could endure
Such distance from her husband new-return'd
To his own country in the twentieth year,
After much hardship : but thy heart is still
As ever, less impressible than stone.

To whom Penelope discreet replied.

I am all wonder, O my son ! my soul
Is stunn'd within me ; power to speak to him
Or to interrogate him have I none,
Or even to look on him ; but if indeed
He be Ulysses, and have reach'd his home,
I shall believe it soon, by proof convinced
Of signs, known only to himself and me.

She said ; then smiled the Hero toil-inured,
And in wing'd accents thus spake to his son.

Leave thou, Telemachus, thy mother here
To sift and prove me ; she will know me soon
More certainly ; she sees me ill-attired
And squalid now ; therefore she shews me scorn,
And no belief hath yet that I am he.
But we have need, thou and myself, of deep
Deliberation. If a man have slain
One only citizen, who leaves behind
Few interested to avenge his death,
Yet flying he forsakes both friends and home ;
But we have slain the noblest Princes far
Of Ithaca, on whom our city most
Depended ; therefore, I advise thee, think !

Him, prudent, then answer'd Telemachus.

Be that thy care, my father ! for report
Proclaims *thee* shrewdest of mankind, with whom
In ingenuity may none compare.
Lead thou ; to follow thee shall be our part
With prompt alacrity ; nor shall, I judge,

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Courage be wanting to our utmost force.

Thus then replied Ulysses, ever-wise.

150

To me the safest counsel and the best

Seems this. First wash yourselves, and put ye on

Your tunics ; bid ye next the maidens take

Their best attire, and let the bard divine

Harping melodious play a sportive dance,

155

That whether passenger or neighbour hear,

All may imagine nuptials held within.

So shall not loud report that we have slain

All those, alarm the city till we gain

Our woods and fields, where once arrived, such plans

160

We will devise, as Jove shall deign to inspire.

He spake, and all obedient in the bath

First laved themselves, then put their tunics on ;

The damsels also dress'd, and the sweet bard

Harping melodious, kindled strong desire

165

In all of jocund song and graceful dance.

The palace under all its vaulted roof

Remurmur'd to the feet of sportive youths

And cinctured maidens, while no few abroad,

Hearing such revelry within, remark'd ;—

170

The Queen with many wooers, weds at last.

Ah fickle and unworthy fair ! too frail

Always to keep inviolate the house

Of her first Lord, and wait for his return.

So spake the people ; but they little knew

175

What had befallen. Eurynome, meantime,

With bath and unction served the illustrious Chief

Ulysses, and he saw himself attired

Royally once again in his own house.

Then Pallas over all his features shed

180

Superior beauty, dignified his form

With added amplitude, and pour'd his curls

Like hyacinthine flowers down from his brows.

As when some artist by Minerva made

And Vulcan, wise to execute all tasks

185

Ingenious, borders silver with a wreath

Of gold, accomplishing a graceful work,

Such grace the Goddess o'er his ample chest

Copious diffused, and o'er his manly brows.

He, godlike, stepping from the bath, resumed,
His former seat magnificent, and sat
Opposite to the Queen, to whom he said.

Penelope! the Gods to thee have given
Of all thy sex, the most obdurate heart.
Another wife lives not who could endure
Such distance from her husband new-return'd
To his own country in the twentieth year,
After such hardship. But prepare me, nurse,
A bed, for solitary I must sleep,
Since she is iron, and feels not for me.

Him answer'd then prudent Penelope.
I neither magnify thee, sir! nor yet
Depreciate thee, nor is my wonder such
As hurries me at once into thy arms,
Though my remembrance perfectly retains,
Such as he was, Ulysses, when he sail'd
On board his bark from Ithaca—Go, nurse,
Prepare his bed, but not within the walls
Of his own chamber built with his own hands.
Spread it without, and spread it well with warm
Mantles, with fleeces, and with richest rugs.

So spake she, proving him¹, and, not untouched
With anger at that word, thus he replied.

Penelope, that order grates my ear.
Who hath displaced my bed? the task were hard
Even to an artist; other than a God
None might with ease remove it; as for man,
It might defy the stoutest, in his prime
Of youth, to heave it to a different spot,
For in that bed elaborate, a sign,
A special sign consists; I was myself
The artificer; I fashion'd it alone.
Within the court a leafy olive grew
Lofty, luxuriant, pillar-like in girth.
Around this tree I built, with massy stones

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¹ The proof consisted in this—that the bed being attached to the stump of an olive tree still rooted, was immoveable, and Ulysses having made it himself, no person present, he must needs be apprized of the impossibility of her orders, if he were indeed Ulysses; accordingly, this demonstration of his identity satisfies all her scruples.

Cemented close, my chamber, roof'd it o'er,
And hung the glutinated portals on.
I lopp'd the ample foliage and the boughs,
And severing near the root its solid bole,
Smooth'd all the rugged stump with skilful hand,
And wrought it to a pedestal well squared
And modell'd by the line. I wimbled, next,
The frame throughout, and from the olive-stump
Beginning, fashion'd the whole bed above
Till all was finish'd, plated o'er with gold,
With silver, and with ivory, and beneath
Close interlaced with purple cordage strong.
Such sign I give thee. But if still it stand
Unmoved, or if some other, severing sheer
The olive from its bottom, have displaced
My bed—that matter is best known to thee. 230

He ceased ; she, conscious of the sign so plain
Given by Ulysses, heard with fluttering heart
And faltering knees that proof. Weeping she ran
Direct toward him, threw her arms around
The Hero, kiss'd his forehead, and replied. 235

Ah my Ulysses ! pardon me—frown not—
Thou who at other times hast ever shown
Superior wisdom ! all our griefs have flow'd
From the Gods' will ; they envied us the bliss
Of undivided union sweet enjoy'd
Through life, from early youth to latest age. 250
No. Be not angry now ; pardon the fault
That I embraced thee not as soon as seen,
For horror hath not ceased to overwhelm
My soul, lest some false alien should, perchance,
Beguile me, for our house draws numerous such.
Jove's daughter, Argive Helen, ne'er had given
Free entertainment to a stranger's love,
Had she foreknown that the heroic sons
Of Greece would bring her to her home again. 255
But heaven incited her to that offence,
Who never, else, had even in her thought
Harbour'd the foul enormity, from which
Originated even our distress. 260
But now, since evident thou hast described

Our bed, which never mortal yet beheld,
Ourselves except and Actoris my own
Attendant, given me when I left my home
By good Icarus, and who kept the door,
Though hard to be convinced, at last I yield.

So saying, she awaken'd in his soul
Pity and grief; and folding in his arms
His blameless consort beautiful, he wept. 270
Welcome as land appears to those who swim,
Whose gallant bark Neptune with rolling waves
And stormy winds hath sunk in the wide sea, 275
A mariner or two, perchance, escape
The foamy flood, and swimming reach the land,
Weary indeed, and with incrusted brine 280
All rough, but oh, how glad to climb the coast!
So welcome in her eyes Ulysses seem'd,
Around whose neck winding her snowy arms,
She clung as she would loose him never more.
Thus had they wept till rosy-finger'd morn 285
Had found them weeping, but Minerva check'd
Night's almost finish'd course, and held, meantime,
The golden dawn close prisoner in the Deep,
Forbidding her to lead her coursers forth,
Lampus and Phaëthon that furnish light 290
To all the earth, and join them to the yoke.
Then thus Ulysses to Penelope.

My love! we have not yet attain'd the close
Of all our sufferings, but unmeasured toil
Arduous remains, which I must still achieve. 295
For so the spirit of the Theban seer
Inform'd me, on that day, when to enquire
Of mine and of my people's safe return
I journey'd down to Pluto's drear abode.
But let us hence to bed, there to enjoy 300
Tranquil repose. My love, make no delay.

Him answer'd then prudent Penelope.
Thou shalt to bed at whatsoever time
Thy soul desires, since the immortal Gods
Give thee to me and to thy home again. 305
But thou hast spoken from the seer of Thebes
Of arduous toils yet unperform'd; declare

What toils ? Thou wilt disclose them, as I judge,
Hereafter, and why not disclose them now ?

To whom Ulysses, ever-wise, replied.

310

Ah conversant with woe ! why would'st thou learn
That tale ? but I will tell it thee at large.

Thou wilt not hear with joy, nor shall myself
With joy rehearse it ; for he bade me seek

315

City after city, bearing, as I go,

A shapely oar, till I shall find, at length,

A people who the sea know not, nor eat

Food salted ; they trim galley crimson-prow'd

Have ne'er beheld, nor yet smooth-shaven oar

With which the vessel wing'd scuds o'er the waves.

320

He gave me also this authentic sign,

Which I will tell thee. In what place soe'er

I chance to meet a traveller who shall name

The oar on my broad shoulder borne, a van ;²

He bade me, planting it on that same spot,

325

Worship the King of Ocean with a bull,

A ram, and a lascivious boar, then seek

My home again, and sacrifice at home

An hecatomb to the immortal Gods,

Inhabitants of the expanse above.

330

So shall I die, at length, the gentlest death

Remote from Ocean ; it shall find me late,

In soft serenity of age, the Chief

Of a blest people.—Thus he prophesied.

Him answer'd then Penelope discreet.

335

If heaven appoint thee in old age a lot

More tranquil, hope thence springs of thy escape

Some future day from all thy threaten'd woes.

Such was their mutual conference sweet ; meantime
Eurynome and Euryclea dress'd

340

Their bed by light of the clear torch, and when

Dispatchful they had spread it broad and deep,

The ancient nurse to her own bed retired.

Then came Eurynome, to whom in trust

The chambers appertain'd, and with a torch

345

Conducted them to rest ; she introduced

The happy pair, and went ; transported they

² See the note on the same passage, Book xi.

To rites connubial intermitted long,
And now recover'd gave themselves again.³
Meantime, the Prince, the herdsman, and the good
Eumæus, giving rest each to his feet,
Ceased from the dance ; they made the women cease
Also, and to their several chambers all
Within the twilight edifice repair'd.

At length with conjugal endearment both
Satiate, Ulysses tasted and his spouse
The sweets of mutual converse. She rehearsed,
Noblest of women, all her numerous woes
Beneath that roof sustain'd, while she beheld
The profligacy of the suitor-throng, 350
Who in their wooing had consumed his herds
And fatted flocks, and drawn his vessels dry ;
While brave Ulysses, in his turn, to her
Related his successes and escapes,
And his afflictions also ; he told her all ; 355
She listen'd charm'd, nor slumber on his eyes
Fell once, or ere he had rehearsed the whole.
Beginning, he discoursed, how at the first
He conquer'd in Ciconia, and thence reach'd
The fruitful shores of the Lotophagi ; 370
The Cyclops' deeds he told her next, and how
He well avenged on him his slaughter'd friends
Whom, pitiless, the monster had devour'd.
How to the isle of Æolus he came,
Who welcomed him and safe dismiss'd him thence, 375
Although not destined to regain so soon
His native land ; for o'er the fishy deep
Loud tempests snatch'd him sighing back again.
How, also at Telepylus he arrived,
Town of the Læstrygonians, who destroy'd 380
His ships with all their mariners, his own
Except, who in his sable bark escaped.
Of guileful Circe too he spake, deep-skill'd
In various artifice, and how he reach'd

³ Aristophanes the grammarian and Aristarchus chose that the *Odyssey* should end here ; but the story is not properly concluded till the tumult occasioned by the slaughter of so many Princes being composed, Ulysses finds himself once more in peaceable possession of his country.

With sails and oars the squalid realms of death, 385
 Desirous to consult the prophet there,
 Theban Tiresias, and how there he view'd
 All his companions, and the mother bland
 Who bare him, nourisher of his infant years.

How next he heard the Sirens in one strain 390
 All chiming sweet, and how he reach'd the rocks
 Erratic, Scylla and Charybdis dire,
 Which none secure from injury may pass.
 Then how the partners of his voyage slew

The Sun's own beeves, and how the Thunderer Jove 395
 Hurl'd down his smoky bolts into his bark,
 Depriving him at once of all his crew,
 Whose dreadful fate he yet himself escaped.

How to Ogygia's isle he came, where dwelt 400
 The nymph Calypso, who enamour'd wish'd
 To espouse him, and within her spacious grot
 Detain'd, and fed, and promised him a life
 Exempt for ever from the sap of age,
 But him moved not. How also he arrived, 405
 After much toil, on the Phœacian coast,
 Where every heart revered him as a God,
 And whence, enriching him with brass and gold,
 And costly raiment first, they sent him home.

At this last word, oblivious slumber sweet 410
 Fell on him, dissipating all his cares.

Meantime, Minerva, Goddess azure-eyed,
 On other thoughts intent, soon as she deem'd
 Ulysses with connubial joys sufficed,
 And with sweet sleep, at once from Ocean roused
 The golden-axed chariot of the morn 415
 To illumine earth. Then from his fleecy couch
 The Hero sprang, and thus his spouse enjoin'd.

Oh consort dear! already we have striven
 Against our lot till wearied with the toil,
 My painful absence thou with ceaseless tears 420
 Deploring, and myself in deep distress
 Withheld reluctant from my native shores
 By Jove and by the other powers of heaven.
 But since we have in this delightful bed
 Met once again, watch thou and keep secure 425

All my domestic treasures, and ere long
I will replace my numerous sheep destroy'd
By those imperious suitors, and the Greeks
Shall add yet others till my folds be fill'd.
But to the woodlands go I now—to see
My noble father, who for my sake mourns
Continual; as for thee, my love, although
I know thee wise, I give thee thus in charge.
The sun no sooner shall ascend, than fame
Shall wide divulge the deed that I have done,
Slaying the suitors under my own roof.
Thou, therefore, with thy maidens sit retired
In thy own chamber at the palace-top,
Nor question ask, nor curious look abroad.

He said, and covering with his radiant arms
His shoulders, call'd Telemachus; he roused
Eumæus and the herdsman too, and bade
All take their martial weapons in their hands.
Not disobedient they, as he enjoin'd,
Put armour on, and issued from the gates,
Ulysses at their head. The earth was now
Enlighten'd, but Minerva them in haste
Led forth into the fields, unseen by all.

430

435

440

445

BOOK XXIV.

A R G U M E N T.

Mercury conducts the souls of the suitors down to Ades. Ulysses discovers himself to Laertes, and quells, by the aid of Minerva, an insurrection of the people resenting the death of the suitors.

AND now Cyllenian Hermes summon'd forth
 The spirits of the suitors ; waving wide
 The golden wand of power to seal all eyes
 In slumber, and to ope them wide again,
 He drove them gibbering¹ down into the shades. 5
 As when the bats within some hallow'd cave
 Flit squeaking all around, for if but one
 Fall from the rock, the rest all follow him,
 In such connexion mutual they adhere ;
 So, after bounteous Mercury, the ghosts 10
 Troop'd downward, gibbering¹ all the dreary way.
 The Ocean's flood and the Leucadian rock,
 The Sun's gate also and the land of Dreams
 They pass'd, whence next into the meads they came
 Of Asphodel, by shadowy forms possess'd, 15
 Simulars of the dead. They found the souls
 Of brave Pelides there, and of his friend
 Patroclus, of Antilochus renown'd,
 And of the mightier Ajax, for his form
 And bulk (Achilles sole except) of all 20
 The sons of the Achaians most admired.
 These waited on Achilles. Then appear'd
 The mournful ghost of Agamemnon, son
 Of Atreus, compass'd by the ghosts of all

¹ Τρίζεσται τετρηγνιαται

the ghosts

Did squeak and gibber in the Roman streets.

Who shared his fate beneath *Ægisthus'* roof,
And him the ghost of Peleus' son bespake.

25

Atrides ! of all Heroes we esteem'd
Thee dearest to the Gods, for that thy sway
Extended over such a glorious host

At Ilium, scene of sorrow to the Greeks.

30

But Fate, whose ruthless force none may escape
Of all who breathe, pursued thee from the first.
Thou should'st have perish'd full of honour, full
Of royalty, at Troy ; so all the Greeks
Had raised thy tomb, and thou hadst then bequeath'd
Great glory to thy son ; but Fate ordain'd
A death, oh how deplorable ! for thee.

35

To whom Atrides' spirit thus replied.
Blest son of Peleus, semblance of the Gods,
At Ilium, far from Argos fallen ! for whom
Contending, many a Trojan, many a Chief
Of Greece died also, while in eddies whelm'd
Of dust thy vastness² spread the plain, nor thee
The chariot aught or steed could interest more !

40

All day we waged the battle, nor at last
Desisted, but for tempests sent from Jove.
At length, we bore into the Grecian fleet
Thy body from the field ; there first we cleansed
With tepid baths, and oil'd thy shapely corse,
Then placed thee on thy bier, while many a Greek
Around thee wept, and shore his locks for thee.

50

Thy mother also, hearing of thy death,
With her immortal nymphs from the abyss
Arose and came ; terrible was the sound
On the salt flood ; a panic seized the Greeks,
And every warrior had return'd on board
That moment, had not Nestor, ancient Chief,
Illumed by long experience, interposed ;
His counsels, ever-wisest, wisest proved
Then also, and he thus address'd the host.

55

Sons of Achaia, fly not ; stay, ye Greeks !
Thetis arrives with her immortal nymphs
From the abyss, to visit her dead son.

60

² —— Behemoth, biggest born of earth,
Upheaved his vastness.

MILTON.

So he ; and, by his admonition stay'd,
 The Greeks fled not. Then all around thee stood
 The daughters of the Ancient of the Deep, 65
 Mourning disconsolate ; with heavenly robes
 They clothed thy corse, and all the Muses nine
 Deplored thee in full choir with sweetest tones
 Responsive, nor one Grecian hadst thou seen
 Dry-eyed, such grief the Muses moved in all.
 Full seventeen days we day and night deplored
 Thy death, both Gods in heaven and men below ;
 But on the eighteenth day, we gave thy corse
 Its burning, and fat sheep around thee slew 75
 Numerous, with many a pastured ox moon-horn'd.
 We burn'd thee clothed in vesture of the Gods,
 With honey and with oil feeding the flames
 Abundant, while Achaia's Heroes arm'd,
 Both horse and foot, encompassing thy pile,
 Clash'd on their shields, and deafening was the din. 80
 But when the fires of Vulcan had at length
 Consumed thee, at the dawn we stored thy bones
 In unguent and in undiluted wine ;
 For Thetis gave to us a golden vase
 Twin-ear'd, which she profess'd to have received 85
 From Bacchus, work divine of Vulcan's hand.
 Within that vase, Achilles, treasured lie
 Thine and the bones of thy departed friend
 Patroclus, but a separate urn we gave
 To those of brave Antilochus, who most 90
 Of all thy friends at Ilium shared thy love
 And thy respect, thy friend Patroclus slain
 Around both urns we piled a noble tomb
 (We warriors of the sacred Argive host),
 On a tall promontory shooting far 95
 Into the spacious Hellespont, that all
 Who live, and who shall yet be born, may view
 Thy record, even from the distant waves.
 Then, by permission from the Gods obtain'd,
 To the Achaian Chiefs in circus met, 100
 Thetis appointed games. I have beheld
 The burial rites of many a Hero bold,
 When on the death of some great Chief, the youths

Girding their loins anticipate the prize,
But sight of those with wonder fill'd me most,
So glorious past all others were the games
By silver-footed Thetis given for thee,
For thou wast ever favour'd of the Gods.

105

Thus hast thou not, Achilles ! although dead,
Forgone thy glory, but thy fair report
Is universal among all mankind ;
But as for me, what recompense had I,
My warfare closed ? for whom, at my return,
Jove framed such dire destruction by the hands
Of fell \mathbb{A} gisthus and my murdereress wife.

110

Thus mutual they conferr'd ; meantime approach'd,
Swift messenger of heaven, the Argicide,
Conducting thither all the shades of those
Slain by Ulysses. At that sight amazed,
Both moved toward them. Agamemnon's shade
Knew well Amphimedon, for he had been
Erewhile his father's guest in Ithaca,
And thus the spirit of Atreus' son began.

115

Amphimedon ! by what disastrous chance,
Coëvals as ye seem, and of an air
Distinguish'd all, descend ye to the Deeps ?
For not the chosen youths of a whole town
Should form a nobler band. Perish'd ye sunk
Amid vast billows and rude tempests raised
By Neptune's power ? or on dry land through force
Of hostile multitudes, while cutting off
Beoves from the herd, or driving flocks away ?
Or fighting for your city and your wives ?
Resolve me ; I was once a guest of yours.
Remember'st not what time at your abode
With godlike Menelaüs I arrived,
That we might win Ulysses with his fleet
To follow us to Troy ? scarce we prevail'd
At last to gain the city-waster Chief,
And after all, consumed a whole month more
The wide sea traversing from side to side.

125

130

135

To whom the spirit of Amphimedon.

Illustrious Agamemnon, King of men !

All this I bear in mind, and will rehearse

140

145

The manner of our most disastrous end.
 Believing brave Ulysses lost, we woo'd
 Meantime his wife ; she our detested suit
 Would neither ratify nor yet refuse,
 But, planning for us a tremendous death, 150
 This novel stratagem, at last, devised.
 Beginning in her own recess, a web
 Of slenderest thread, and of a length and breadth
 Unusual, thus the suitors she address'd.

Princes, my suitors ! since the noble Chief 155
 Ulysses is no more, enforce not yet
 My nuptials ; wait till I shall finish first
 A funeral robe (lest all my threads decay),
 Which for the ancient Hero I prepare,
 Laertes, looking for the mournful hour 160
 When fate shall snatch him to eternal rest ;
 Else I the censure dread of all my sex,
 Should he, so wealthy, want at last a shroud.

So spake the Queen ; we, unsuspecting all,
 With her request complied. Thenceforth, all day 165
 She wove the ample web, and by the aid
 Of torches ravell'd it again at night.
 Three years she thus by artifice our suit
 Eluded safe, but when the fourth arrived,
 And the same season, after many moons 170
 And fleeting days return'd, a damsel then
 Of her attendants, conscious of the fraud,
 Reveal'd it, and we found her pulling loose
 The splendid web. Thus, through constraint, at length
 She finish'd it, and in her own despite. 175
 But when the Queen produced, at length, her work
 Finish'd, new-blanch'd, bright as the sun or moon,
 Then came Ulysses, by some adverse God
 Conducted to the cottage on the verge
 Of his own fields, in which his swine-herd dwells ; 180
 There also the illustrious Hero's son
 Arrived soon after, in his sable bark
 From sandy Pylus borne ; they plotting both
 A dreadful death for all the suitors, sought
 Our glorious city, but Ulysses last, 185
 And first Telemachus. The father came,

Conducted by his swine-herd, and attired
 In tatters foul ; a mendicant he seem'd,
 Time-worn, and halted on a staff. So clad,
 And entering on a sudden, he escaped
 All knowledge even of our eldest there,
 And we reviled and smote him ; he, although
 Beneath his own roof smitten and reproach'd,
 With patience suffer'd it awhile, but roused
 By inspiration of Jove ægis-arm'd 190

At length, in concert with his son convey'd
 To his own chamber his resplendent arms,
 There lodged them safe, and barr'd the massy doors.
 Then, in his subtlety, he bade the Queen
 A contest institute with bow and rings 195

Between the hapless suitors, whence ensued
 Slaughter to all. No suitor there had power
 To overcome the stubborn bow that mock'd
 All our attempts ; and when the weapon huge
 At length was offer'd to Ulysses' hands, 200

With clamour'd menaces we bade the swain
 Withhold it from him, plead he as he might ;
 Telemachus alone, with loud command,
 Bade give it him, and the illustrious Chief
 Receiving in his hand the bow, with ease 205

Bent it, and sped a shaft through all the rings.
 Then springing to the portal steps, he pour'd
 The arrows forth, peer'd terrible around,
 Pierced King Antinoüs, and aiming sure
 His deadly darts, pierced others after him, 210

Till in one common carnage heap'd we lay.
 Some God, as plain appear'd, vouchsafed them aid,
 Such ardour urged them, and with such dispatch
 They slew us on all sides ; hideous were heard
 The groans of dying men fell'd to the earth 215

With head-strokes rude, and the floor swam with blood.
 Such, royal Agamemnon ! was the fate
 By which we perish'd, all whose bodies lie
 Unburied still, and in Ulysses' house,
 For tidings none hath yet our friends alarm'd 220

And kindred, who might cleanse from sable gore
 Our clotted wounds, and mourn us on the bier,

Which are the rightful privilege of the dead.

Him answer'd, then, the shade of Atreus' son.

Oh happy offspring of Laertes ! shrewd

230

Ulysses ! matchless valour thou hast shewn,

Recovering thus thy wife ; nor less appears

The virtue of Icarus' daughter wise,

The chaste Penelope, so faithful found

235

To her Ulysses, husband of her youth.

His glory, by superior merit earn'd,

Shall never die, and the immortal Gods

Shall make Penelope a theme of song

Delightful in the ears of all mankind.

Not such was Clytemnestra, daughter vile

240

Of Tyndarus ; she shed her husband's blood,

And shall be chronicled in song a wife

Of hateful memory, by whose offence

Even the virtuous of her sex are shamed.

Thus they, beneath the vaulted roof obscure

245

Of Pluto's house, conferring mutual stood.

Meantime, descending from the city-gates,

Ulysses, by his son and by his swains

Follow'd, arrived at the delightful farm

Which old Laertes had with strenuous toil

250

Himself long since acquired. There stood his house,

Encompass'd by a bower, in which the hinds

Who served and pleased him, ate, and sat, and slept.

An ancient woman, a Sicilian, dwelt

There also, who in that sequester'd spot

255

Attended diligent her aged Lord.

Then thus Ulysses to his followers spake.

Haste now, and entering, slay ye of the swine

The best for our regale ; myself the while,

Will prove my father, if his eye hath still

260

Discernment of me, or if absence long

Have worn the knowledge of me from his mind.

He said, and gave into his servants' care

His arms ; they swift proceeded to the house,

And to the fruitful grove himself as swift

265

To prove his father. Down he went at once

Into the spacious garden-plot, but found

Nor Dolius there, nor any of his sons

Or servants ; they were occupied elsewhere,
And with the ancient hind himself, employ'd
Collecting thorns with which to fence the grove. 270

In that umbrageous spot he found alone
Laertes, with his hoe clearing a plant;
Sordid his tunic was, with many a patch
Mended unseemly ; leathern were his greaves, 275
Thong-tied and also patch'd, a frail defence
Against sharp thorns, while gloves secured his hands
From briar-points, and on his head he bore
A goat-skin casque, nourishing hopeless woe.

No sooner then the Hero toil-inured. 280
Saw him age-worn and wretched, than he paused
Beneath a lofty pear-tree's shade to weep.
There standing, much he mused, whether, at once,
Kissing and clasping in his arms his sire,
To tell him all, by what means he had reach'd 285
His native country, or to prove him first.
At length he chose as his best course, with words
Of seeming strangeness to accost his ear,
And with that purpose, moved direct toward him.
He stooping low, loosen'd the earth around 290
A garden-plant, when his illustrious son
Now standing close beside him, thus began.

Old sir ! thou art no novice in these toils
Of culture, but thy garden thrives ; I mark
In all thy ground no plant, fig, olive, vine, 295
Pear-tree or flower-bed suffering through neglect.
But let it not offend thee if I say
That thou neglect'st thyself, at the same time
Oppress'd with age, sun-parch'd, and ill-attired.
Not for thy inactivity, methinks, 300
Thy master slighteth thee thus, nor speaks thy form
Or thy surpassing stature servile aught
In thee, but thou resemblest more a King.
Yes—thou resemblest one who, bathed and fed,
Should softly sleep ; such is the claim of age. 305
But tell me true—for whom labourest thou,
And whose this garden ? answer me beside,
For I would learn; have I indeed arrived
In Ithaca, as one whom here I met

Even now assured me, but who seem'd a man
Not overwise, refusing both to hear
My questions, and to answer when I ask'd
Concerning one in other days my guest
And friend, if he have still his being here,
Or have deceased and journey'd to the shades ? 310
For I will tell thee ; therefore mark. Long since
A stranger reach'd my house in my own land,
Whom I with hospitality received,
Nor ever sojourn'd foreigner with me
Whom I loved more. He was by birth, he said, 315
Ithacan, and Laertes claim'd his sire,
Son of Arcesias. Introducing him
Beneath my roof, I entertain'd him well,
And proved by gifts his welcome at my board.
I gave him seven talents of wrought gold, 320
A goblet, argent all, with flowers emboss'd,
Twelve single cloaks, twelve carpets, mantles twelve
Of brightest lustre, with as many vests,
And added four fair damsels, whom he chose
Himself, well born and well accomplish'd all. 325
Then thus his ancient sire weeping replied.
Stranger ! thou hast in truth attain'd the isle
Of thy enquiry, but it is possess'd
By a rude race, and lawless. Vain, alas !
Were all thy numerous gifts ; yet hadst thou found 330
Him living here in Ithaca, with gifts
Reciprocated he had sent thee hence,
Requiring honourably in his turn
Thy hospitality. But give me quick
Answer, and true. How many have been the years 335
Since thy reception of that hapless guest
My son ? for mine, my own dear son was he.
But him, far distant both from friends and home,
Either the fishes of the unknown Deep
Have eaten, or wild beasts and fowls of prey. 340
Nor I, or she who bare him, was ordain'd
To bathe his shrouded body with our tears,
Nor his chaste wife, well-dower'd Penelope,
To close her husband's eyes, and to deplore
His doom, which is the privilege of the dead. 345
350

But tell me also thou, for I would learn,
 Who art thou? whence? where born? and sprung from whom?
 The bark in which thou and thy godlike friends
 Arrived, where is she anchor'd on our coast?
 Or camest thou only passenger on board
 Another's bark, who landed thee and went?

355

To whom Ulysses, ever wise, replied.

I will with all simplicity relate
 What thou hast ask'd. Of Alybas am I,
 Where in much state I dwell, son of the rich
 Apheidas, royal Polypemon's son, 360
 And I am named Eperitus; by storms
 Driven from Sicily I have arrived,
 And yonder, on the margin of the field
 That skirts your city, I have moor'd my bark. 365
 Five years have pass'd since thy Ulysses left,
 Unhappy Chief! my country; yet the birds
 At his departure hover'd on the right,
 And in that sign rejoicing, I dismiss'd
 Him thence rejoicing also, for we hoped
 To mix in social intercourse again,
 And to exchange once more pledges of love.

370

He spake; then sorrow as a sable cloud
 Involved Laertes; gathering with both hands
 The dust, he pour'd it on his reverend head
 With many a piteous groan. Ulysses' heart
 Commotion felt, and his stretch'd nostrils throb'd
 With agony close-pent, while fix'd he eyed
 His father; with a sudden force he sprang
 Toward him, clasp'd, and kiss'd him, and exclaim'd. 375

380

My father! I am he. Thou seest thy son
 Absent these twenty years at last return'd.
 But bid thy sorrows cease; suspend henceforth
 All lamentation; for I tell thee true,
 (And the occasion bids me briefly tell thee)
 I have slain all the suitors at my home,
 And all their taunts and injuries avenged.

385

Then answer thus Laertes quick return'd.
 If thou hast come again, and art indeed
 My son Ulysses, give me then the proof
 Indubitable, that I may believe.

390

To whom Ulysses, ever wise, replied.
 View, first, the scar which with his ivory tusk
 A wild boar gave me, when at thy command
 And at my mother's, to Autolycus
 Her father, on Parnassus, I repair'd,
 Seeking the gifts which, while a guest of yours,
 He promised should be mine. Accept beside
 This proof. I will enumerate all the trees
 Which, walking with thee in this cultured spot 400
 (Boy then), I begg'd, and thou confirm'dst my own.
 We paced between them, and thou madest me learn
 The name of each. Thou gavest me thirteen pears³,
 Ten apples³, thirty figs³, and fifty ranks
 Did promise me of vines, their alleys all 405
 Corn-cropp'd between. There oft as sent from Jove
 The influences of the year descend,
 Grapes of all hues and flavours clustering hang.

He said ; Laertes conscious of the proofs
 Indubitable by Ulysses given, 410
 With faltering knees and faltering heart both arms
 Around him threw. The Hero toil-inured
 Drew to his bosom close his fainting sire,
 Who, breath recovering, and his scatter'd powers
 Of intellect, at length thus spake aloud. 415

Ye Gods! oh then your residence is still
 On the Olympian heights, if punishment
 At last hath seized on those flagitious men.
 But terror shakes me, lest, incensed, ere long
 All Ithaca flock hither, and dispatch 420
 Swift messengers with these dread tidings charged
 To every Cephallenian state around.

Him answer'd then Ulysses ever wise.
 Courage! fear nought, but let us to the house
 Beside the garden, whither I have sent 425
 Telemachus, the herdsman, and the good
 Eumæus to prepare us quick repast.

So they conferr'd, and to Laertes' house
 Pass'd on together ; there arrived, they found

³ The fruit is here used for the tree that bore it, as it is in the Greek ; the Latins used the same mode of expression, neither is it uncommon in our own language.

Those three preparing now their plenteous feast,
And mingling sable wine ; then, by the hands
Of his Sicilian matron, the old King
Was bathed, anointed, and attired afresh,
And Pallas, drawing nigh, dilated more
His limbs, and gave his whole majestic form
Increase of amplitude. He left the bath.
His son, amazed as he had seen a God
Alighted newly from the skies, exclaim'd.

My father ! doubtless some immortal Power
Hath clothed thy form with dignity divine.

Then thus replied his venerable sire.
Jove ! Pallas ! Phœbus ! oh that I possess'd
Such vigour now, as when in arms I took
Nericus, continental city fair,
With my brave Cephallenians ! oh that such
And arm'd as then, I yesterday had stood
Beside thee in thy palace, combating
Those suitors proud, then had I strew'd the floor
With numerous slain, to thy exceeding joy.

Such was their conference ; and now, the task
Of preparation ended, and the feast
Set forth, on couches and on thrones they sat,
And ranged in order due, took each his share.
Then ancient Dolius, and with him his sons
Arrived toil-worn, by the Sicilian dame
Summon'd, their cateress, and their father's kind
Attendant ever in his eve of life.

They, seeing and recalling soon to mind
Ulysses, in the middle mansion stood
Wondering, when thus Ulysses with a voice
Of some reproof, but gentle, them bespake.

Old servant, sit and eat, banishing fear
And mute amazement ; for, although provoked
By appetite, we have long time abstain'd,
Expecting every moment thy return.

He said ; then Dolius with expanded arms
Sprang right toward Ulysses, seized his hand,
Kiss'd it, and in wing'd accents thus replied.

Oh master ever dear ! since thee the Gods
Themselves, in answer to our warm desires,

430

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470

Have, unexpectedly, at length restored,
 Hail, and be happy, and heaven make thee such !
 But say, and truly ; knows the prudent Queen
 Already thy return, or shall we send
 Ourselves an herald with the joyful news ?

475

To whom Ulysses, ever wise, replied.
 My ancient friend, thou may'st release thy mind
 From that solicitude ; she knows it well.

So he ; then Dolius to his glossy seat
 Return'd, and all his sons gathering around
 Ulysses, welcomed him and grasp'd his hand,
 Then sat beside their father ; thus beneath
 Laertes' roof they, joyful, took repast.

480

But Fame with rapid haste the city roam'd
 In every part, promulgling in all ears
 The suitors' horrid fate. No sooner heard
 The multitude that tale, than one and all
 Groaning they met and murmuring before
 Ulysses' gates. Bringing the bodies forth,
 They buried each his friend, but gave the dead
 Of other cities to be ferried home
 By fishermen on board their rapid barks.
 All hasted then to council ; sorrow wrung
 Their hearts, and the assembly now convened,
 Arising first Eupitheus spake, for grief
 Sat heavy on his soul, grief for the loss
 Of his Antinoüs, by Ulysses slain
 Foremost of all, whom mourning, thus he said.

485

My friends ! no trivial fruits the Grecians reap
 Of this man's doings. *Those* he took with him
 On board his barks, a numerous train and bold,
 Then lost his barks, lost all his numerous train,
 And *these*, our noblest, slew at his return.
 Come therefore—ere he yet escape by flight
 To Pylus or to noble Elis, realm
 Of the Epeans, follow him ; else shame
 Attends us and indelible reproach.
 If we avenge not on these men the blood
 Of our own sons and brothers, farewell then
 All that makes life desirable ; my wish
 Henceforth shall be to mingle with the shades.

490

495

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510

Oh then pursue and seize them ere they fly.

Thus he with tears, and pity moved in all.

Then, Medon and the sacred bard whom sleep
Had lately left, arriving from the house

515

Of Laertiades, approach'd ; amid

The throng they stood ; all wonder'd seeing them,
And Medon, prudent senior, thus began.

Hear me, my countrymen ! Ulysses plann'd
With no disapprobation of the Gods

520

The deed that ye deplore. I saw, myself,

A Power immortal at the Hero's side,

In semblance just of Mentor ; now the God,

In front apparent, led him on, and now,

From side to side of all the palace, urged

525

To flight the suitors ; heaps on heaps they fell.

He said ; then terror wan seized every cheek,

And Halitherses, Hero old, the son

Of Mastor, who alone among them all

Knew past and future, prudent, thus began.

530

Now, O ye men of Ithaca ! my words

Attentive hear ! by your own fault, my friends,

This deed hath been perform'd ; for when myself

And noble Mentor counsell'd you to check

The sin and folly of your sons, ye would not.

535

Great was their wickedness, and flagrant wrong

They wrought, the wealth devouring, and the wife

Dishonouring of an illustrious Chief

Whom they deem'd destined never to return.

But hear my counsel. Go not, lest ye draw

540

Disaster down and woe on your own heads.

He ended ; then with boisterous roar (although
Part kept their seats) upsprang the multitude,

For Halitherses pleased them not, they chose

Eupithe's counsel rather ; all at once

545

To arms they flew, and clad in dazzling brass,

Before the city form'd their dense array.

Leader infatuate, at their head appear'd

Eupithe, hoping to avenge his son

Antinoüs, but was himself ordain'd

To meet his doom, and to return no more.

Then thus Minerva to Saturnian Jove.

550

Oh father ! son of Saturn ! Jove supreme !
 Declare the purpose hidden in thy breast.
 Wilt thou that this hostility proceed,
 Or wilt thou grant them amity again ?

555

To whom the cloud-assembler God replied.
 Why asks my daughter ? didst thou not design
 Thyself, that brave Ulysses coming home
 Should slay those profligates ? act as thou wilt,
 But thus I counsel. Since the noble Chief
 Hath slain the suitors, now let peace ensue
 Oath-bound, and reign Ulysses evermore !
 The slaughter of their brethren and their sons
 To strike from their remembrance, shall be ours.

560

565

Let mutual amity, as at the first,
 Unite them, and let wealth and peace abound.

So saying, he animated to her task
 Minerva prompt before, and from the heights
 Olympian down to Ithaca she flew,
 Meantime Ulysses (for their hunger now
 And thirst were sated) thus address'd his hinds.

570

Look ye abroad, lest haply they approach.
 He said, and at his word forth went a son
 Of Dolius ; at the gate he stood, and thence
 Beholding all that multitude at hand,
 In accents wing'd thus to Ulysses spake.

575

They come—they are already arrived—arm all !

Then, all arising, put their armour on,

580

Ulysses with his three, and the six sons

Of Dolius ; Dolius also with the rest

Arm'd and Laertes, although silver-hair'd,

Warriors perforce. When all were clad alike

In radiant armour, throwing wide the gates

585

They sallied, and Ulysses led the way.

Then Jove's own daughter Pallas, in the form

And with the voice of Mentor, came in view,

Whom seeing Laertiades rejoiced,

And thus Telemachus, his son, bespake.

Now, oh my son ! thou shalt observe, untold

590

By me, where fight the bravest. Oh shame not

Thine ancestry, who have in all the earth

Proof given of valour in all ages past.

To whom Telemachus, discreet, replied.
 My father ! if thou wish that spectacle,
 Thou shalt behold thy son as thou hast said,
 In nought dishonouring his noble race.

595

Then was Laertes joyful, and exclaim'd,
 What sun hath risen to day ?⁴ oh blessed Gods !
 My son and grandson emulous dispute
 The prize of glory, and my soul exults.

600

He ended, and Minerva, drawing nigh
 To the old King, thus counsell'd him. Oh friend
 Whom most I love, son of Arcesias ; prayer
 Preferring to the virgin azure-eyed,
 And to her father, Jove, delay not, shake
 Thy lance in air, and give it instant flight.

605

So saying, the Goddess nerved his arm anew.
 He sought in prayer the daughter dread of Jove,
 And brandishing it, hurl'd his lance ; it struck
 Eupitheus, pierced his helmet brazen-cheek'd,
 That stay'd it not, but forth it sprang beyond,
 And with loud clangor of his arms he fell.
 Then flew Ulysses and his noble son
 With faulchion and with spear of double edge
 To the assault, and of them all had left
 None living, none had to his home return'd,
 But that Jove's virgin daughter with a voice
 Of loud authority thus quell'd them all.

610

Peace, O ye men of Ithaca ! while yet
 The field remains undeluged with your blood.

615

So she, and fear at once paled every cheek.
 All trembled at the voice divine ; their arms
 Escaping from the grasp fell to the earth,
 And covetous of longer life, each fled
 Back to the city. Then Ulysses sent
 His voice abroad, and with an eagle's force
 Sprang on the people ; but Saturnian Jove
 Cast down, incontinent, his smouldering bolt
 At Pallas' feet, and thus the Goddess spake.

620

Laertes' noble son, for wiles renown'd !
 Forbear ; abstain from slaughter ; lest thyself

625

⁴ Τίς νύ μοι ἡμίονη ἥδε ;—So Cicero, who seems to translate it — Proh dii immortales ! Quis hic illuxit dies ! See Clarke in loco.

Incur the anger of high-thundering Jove.
So Pallas, whom Ulysses glad obey'd.
Then faithful covenants of peace between
Both sides ensued, ratified in the sight
Of Pallas, progeny of Jove, who seemed,
In voice and form, the Mentor known to all.

635

THE
BATTLE OF THE FROGS AND MICE.
TRANSLATED INTO
ENGLISH BLANK VERSE.

DESCEND all Helicon into my breast !
Oh every virgin of the tuneful choir
Breathe on my song which I have newly traced
In tables open'd on my knees, a song
Of bloodiest note—terrible deeds of Mars,
Well worthy of the ears of all mankind,
Whom I desire to teach, how, erst, the Mice
Assail'd the Frogs, mimicking in exploit
The prowess of the giant race earth-born.
The rumour once was frequent in the mouths
Of mortal men, and thus the strife began.

A thirsty Mouse (thirsty with fear and flight
From a cat's claws) sought out the nearest lake,
Where dipping in the flood his downy chin,
He drank delighted. Him the frog far-famed
Limnocharis¹ espied, and thus he spake.

Who art thou, stranger ? Whence hast thou arrived
On this our border, and who gave thee birth ?
Beware thou trespass not against the truth ;
Lie not ! for should I find thy merit such
As claims my love, I will conduct thee hence
To my abode, where gifts thou shalt receive
Liberal and large, with hospitable fare.
I am the King Physignathus², revered
By the inhabitants of all this pool,

5

10

15

20

25

¹ The beauty of the lake.

² The pouter.

Chief of the frogs for ever. Me, long since,
Peleus³ begat, embracing on the banks
Of the Eridanus my mother fair,
Hydromedusa⁴. Nor thee less than King
Or leader bold in fight thy form proclaims,
Stout as it is, and beautiful.—Dispatch—
Speak therefore, and declare thy pedigree.

He ceased, to whom Psycharpax⁵ thus replied.
Illustrious sir ! wherefore hast thou inquired
My derivation, known to all, alike 35
To Gods and men, and to the fowls of heaven ?
I am Psycharpax, and the dauntless Chief
Troxartes⁶ is my sire, whose beauteous spouse
Daughter of Pternotroctes⁷ brought me forth,
Lichomyle⁸ by name. A cave of earth 40
My cradle was, and, in my youngling state,
My mother nourish'd me with almonds, figs,
And delicacies of a thousand names.
But diverse as our natures are, in nought
Similar, how, alas ! can we be friends ? 45
The floods are thine abode, while I partake
With man his sustenance. The basket stored
With wheaten loaves thrice kneaded, 'scapes not me,
Nor wafer broad, enrich'd wih balmy sweets,
Nor ham in slices spread, nor liver wrapt 50
In tunic silver-white, nor curds express'd
From sweetest milk, nor, sweeter still, the full
Honeycomb, coveted by Kings themselves,
Nor aught by skilful cook invented yet
Of sauce or seasoning for delight of man. 55
I am brave also, and shrink not at sound
Of glorious war, but rushing to the van,
Mix with the foremost combatants. No fear
Of man himself shakes me, vast as he is,
But to his bed I steal, and make me sport, 60
Nibbling his fingers' end, or with sharp tooth
Fretting his heel so neatly that he sleeps
Profound the while, unconscious of the bite.

³ Of or belonging to mud.

⁴ Governess of the waters.

⁵ The crumb-catcher.

⁶ The bread-eater.

⁷ The bacon-eater.

⁸ The licker of mill-stones.

Two things, of all that are, appal me most,
The owl and cat. These cause me many a pang.

65

As does the hollow gin insidious, fair
In promises, but in performance foul,
Engine of death ! yet most of all I dread
Cats, nimble mousers, who can dart a paw
After me, enter at what chink I may.

70

But to return—your diet, parsley, kail,
Beet, radish, gourd (for, as I understand,
Ye eat no other), are not to my taste.

Him then with smiles answer'd Physignathus.

Stranger ! thou vauntest much thy dainty fare,
But, both on shore and in the lake we boast
Our dainties also, and such sights as much
Would move thy wonder ; for by gift from Jove
We leap as well as swim, can range the land
For food, or diving, seek it in the Deep.

75

Would'st thou the proof ? 'tis easy—mount my back—
There cling as for thy life, and thou shalt share
With rapture the delights of my abode.

80

He said, and gave his back. Upsprang the Mouse
Lightly, and with his arms enfolded fast
The Frog's soft neck. Pleased was he, at the first,
With view of many a creek and bay, nor less
With his smooth swimming on whose back he rode.
But when, at length, the clear wave dash'd his sides,
Then, fill'd with penitential sorrows vain,
He wept, pluck'd off his hair, and gathering close
His hinder feet, survey'd with trembling heart
The novel sight, and wish'd for land again.

85

Groans follow'd next, extorted groans, through stress
Of shivering fear, and, with extended tail
Drawn like a long oar after him, he pray'd
For land again ; but, while he pray'd, again
The clear wave dash'd him. Much he shriek'd, and much
He clamour'd, and, at length thus sorrowing, said.

90

Oh desperate navigation strange ! not thus
Europa floated to the shores of Crete
On the broad back of her enamour'd bull.
And now, dread spectacle to both, behold
An Hydra ! on the lake with crest erect

100

He rode, and right toward them. At that sight
Down went Physignathus, heedless, alas ! 105
Through fear, how great a Prince he should destroy.
Himself at bottom of the pool escaped
The dreadful death ; but, at his first descent
Dislodged, Psycharpax fell into the flood. 110
There, stretch'd supine, he clench'd his hands, he shriek'd,
Plunged oft, and lashing out his heels afar,
Oft rose again, but no deliverance found.
At length, oppress'd by his drench'd coat, and soon
To sink for ever, thus he prophesied. 115

Thou hast released thy shoulders at my cost,
Physignathus ! unfeeling as the rock,
But not unnoticed by the Gods above.
Ah worst of traitors ! on dry land, I ween,
Thou hadst not foil'd me, whether in the race 120
Or wrestling-match, or at whatever game.
Thou hast by fraud prevail'd, casting me off
Into the waters ; but an eye divine
Sees all. Nor hope thou to escape the host
Of Mice, who shall, ere long, avenge the deed. 125

So saying, he sank and died ; whom, while he sat
Reposing on the lake's soft verge, the Mouse
Lichopinax⁹ observed ; aloud he wail'd,
And flew with those sad tidings to his friends.
Grief, at the sound, immeasurable seized 130
On all, and by command, at dawn of day
The heralds call'd a council at the house
Of brave Troxartes, father of the Prince
Now lost, a carcass now, nor nigh to land
Weltering, but distant in the middle pool. 135
The multitude in haste convened, uprose
Troxartes for his son incensed, and said.

Ah friends ! although my damage from the Frogs
Sustain'd be greatest, yet is yours not small.
Three children I have lost, wretch that I am, 140
All sons. A merciless and hungry cat,
Finding mine eldest son abroad, surprised
And slew him. Lured into a wooden snare
(New machination of unfeeling man

⁹ The dish-licker.

For slaughter of our race, and named a trap),
 My secoud died. And now, as ye have heard,
 My third, his mother's and my darling, him
 Physignathus hath drown'd in yon abyss.
 Haste therefore, and in gallant armour bright
 Attired, march forth, ye Mice, now seek the foe.

145

So saying, he roused them to the fight, and Mars
 Attendant arm'd them. Splitting first the pods
 Of beans which they had sever'd from the stalk
 With hasty tooth by night, they made them greaves.
 Their corslets were of platted straw, well lined
 With spoils of an excoriated cat.
 The lamp contributed its central tin,
 A shield for each. The glittering needle long
 Arm'd every gripe with a terrific spear,
 And auburn shells of nuts their brows enclosed.

150

Thus arm'd the Mice advanced, of whose approach
 The Frogs apprised, emerging from the lake,
 All throng'd to council, and considering sat
 The sudden tumult and its cause. Then came,
 Sceptre in hand, an herald. Son was he
 Of the renown'd Tyroglyphus,¹⁰ and call'd
 Embasichytrus.¹¹ Charged he came to announce
 The horrors of approaching war, and said,—

165

Ye Frogs! the host of Mice send you by me
 Menaces and defiance. Arm, they say,
 For furious fight; for they have seen the Prince
 Pscharpax weltering on the waves, and drown'd
 By King Physignathus. Ye then, the Chiefs
 And leaders of the hosts of Frogs put on
 Your armour, and draw forth your bands to battle!

170

He said, and went. Then were the noble Frogs
 Troubled at that bold message, and while all
 Murmur'd against Physignathus, the King
 Himself arising, thus denied the charge.

My friends! I neither drown'd the Mouse, nor saw
 His drowning. Doubtless, while he strove in sport
 To imitate the swimming of the Frogs,
 He sank and died. Thus, blame is none in me,
 And these injurious slanders do me wrong.

175

¹⁰ A cheese-rasper.

¹¹ The explorer of pots and pipkins.

Consult we, therefore, how we may destroy
 The subtle Mice, which thus we will perform.
 Arm'd and adorn'd for battle, we will wait
 Their coming where our coast is most abrupt.
 Then, soon as they shall rush to the assault,
 Seizing them by the helmet, as they come,
 We will precipitate them, arms and all,
 Into the lake ; unskilful as they are
 To swim, their suffocation there is sure,
 And we will build a trophy to record
 The great Mouse-massacre for evermore.

185

190

195

So saying, he gave commandment, and all arm'd.
 With leaves of mallows each his legs encased,
 Guarded his bosom with a corslet cut
 From the green beet, with foliage tough of kail
 Fashion'd his ample buckler, with a rush
 Keen-tilt, of length tremendous, fill'd his gripe,
 And on his brows set fast a cockle-shell.
 Then on the summit of the loftiest bank
 Drawn into phalanx firm they stood, all shook
 Their quivering spears, and wrath swell'd every breast.

200

205

Jove saw them, and assembling all the Gods
 To council in the skies, Behold, he said,
 Yon numerous hosts, magnanimous, robust,
 And rough with spears, how like the giant race
 They move, or like the Centaurs ! smiling, next,
 He ask'd, of all the Gods, who favour'd most
 The Mice, and who the Frogs ? but at the last,
 Turning toward Minerva, thus he spake.

210

The Mice, my daughter, need thee ; goest thou not
 To aid thy friends the Mice, inmates of thine,
 Who to thy temple drawn by savoury steams
 Sacrificial, and day by day refresh'd
 With dainties there, dance on thy sacred floor ?

215

So spake the God, and Pallas thus replied.
 My father ! suffer as they may, the Mice
 Shall have no aid from me, whom much they wrong,
 Marring my wreaths, and plundering of their oil
 My lamps.—But this, of all their impious deeds,
 Offends me most, that they have eaten holes
 In my best mantle, which with curious art

220

225

Divine I wove, light, easy, delicate ;
 And now the artificer whom I employ'd
 To mend it, clamouring demands a price
 Exorbitant, which moves me much to wrath,
 For I obtain'd on trust those costly threads,
 And have not wherewithal to pay the arrear.
 Nor love I more the Frogs, or purpose more
 To succour even them, since they not less,
 Dolts as they are, and destitute of thought,
 Have incommodeed me. For when, of late,
 Returning from a fight weary and faint,
 I needed rest, and would have slept, no sleep
 Found I, those ceaseless croakers of the lake,
 Noisy, perverse, forbidding me a wink.
 Sleepless, and with an aching head I lay
 Therefore until the crowing of the cock.
 By my advice, then, O ye Gods, move not,
 Nor interfere, favouring either side,
 Lest ye be wounded ; for both hosts alike
 Are valiant, nor would scruple to assail
 Even ourselves. Suffice it, therefore, hence
 To view the battle, safe, and at our ease.

She ceased, and all complied. Meantime, the hosts
 Drew nearer, and in front of each was seen
 An herald, gonfalon in hand ; huge gnats
 Through clarions of unwieldy length sang forth
 The dreadful note of onset fierce, and Jove
 Doubled the signal, thundering from above.

First, with his spear Hypsiboas¹² assail'd
 Lichenor¹³. Deep into his body rush'd
 The point, and pierced his liver. Prone he fell,
 And all his glossy down with dust defiled.
 Then, Troglodytes¹⁴ hurl'd his massy spear
 At Pelion¹⁵, which he planted in his chest.
 Down dropp'd the Frog, night whelm'd him, and he died. 260
 Seutlaeus¹⁶, through his heart piercing him, slew
 Embasichytrus. Polyphonus¹⁷ fell

¹² The loud-croaker.

¹³ One addicted to licking.

¹⁴ A creeper into holes and crannies.

¹⁵ Offspring of the mud. ¹⁶ A feeder on beet.

¹⁷ The noisy.

Pierced through his belly by the spear of bold
 Artophagus,¹⁸ and prone in dust expired. 265
 Incensed at sight of Polyphonus slain,
 Limnocharis at Troglodytes cast
 A mill-stone weight of rock ; full on the neck
 He batter'd him, and darkness veil'd his eyes.
 At him Lichenor hurl'd a glittering lance,
 Nor err'd, but pierced his liver. Trembling fled
 Crambophagus¹⁹ at that dread sight, and plunged
 Over the precipice into the lake, 270
 Yet even there found refuge none, for brave
 Lichenor following, smote him even there.
 So fell Crambophagus, and from that fall 275
 Never arose, but reddening with his blood
 The wave, and wallowing in the strings and slime
 Of his own vitals, near the bank expired.
 Limnisius²⁰ on the grassy shore struck down
 Tyroglyphus²¹ ; but at the view alone 280
 Of terrible Pternoglyphus²² appall'd,
 Fled Calaminthius²³, cast away his shield
 Afar, and headlong plunged into the lake.
 Hydrocharis²⁴ with a vast stone assail'd
 The King Pternophagus²⁵ ; the rugged mass 285
 Descending on his poll, crush'd it ; the brain
 Oozed through his nostrils drop by drop, and all
 The bank around was spatter'd with his blood.
 Lichopinax with his long spear transpierced
 Borborocoites²⁶ ; darkness veil'd his eyes, 290
 Prassophagus²⁷ with vengeful notice mark'd
 Chissodiocetes²⁸ ; seizing with one hand
 His foot and with the other hand his neck,
 He plunged, and held him plunged, till drown'd he died.
 Psycharpax standing boldly in defence 295
 Of his slain fellow-warriors, urged his spear
 Right through Pelusius²⁹ : at his feet he fell,
 And, dying, mingled with the Frogs below.

¹⁸ The bread-eater.¹⁹ The cabbage-eater.²⁰ Of the lake.²¹ The cheese-scaper.²² The ham-scaper.²³ So called from the herb calamint. water.²⁵ The bacon-eater.²⁴ One whose delight is in ²⁶ The sleeper in the mud.²⁷ The garlic-eater.²⁸ The savoury steam-hunter.²⁹ The muddy.

Resentful of his death, the mighty Frog
 Pelobates³⁰ an handful cast of mud 300
 Full at Psycharpax ; all his ample front
 He smear'd, and left him scarce a glimpse of day.
 Psycharpax, at the foul dishonour, still
 Exasperate more, upheaving from the ground
 A rock that had incumber'd long the bank, 305
 Hurl'd it against Pelobates ; below
 The knees he smote him, shiver'd his right leg
 In pieces, and outstretch'd him in the dust,
 But him Craugasides³¹, who stood to guard
 The fallen Chief, assail'd ; with his long lance
 He prick'd Psycharpax at the waist ! the whole 310
 Keen-pointed rush transpierced his belly, and all
 His bowels following the retracted point,
 O'erspread the ensanguined herbage at his side.
 Soon as Sitophagus³², a crippled mouse,
 That sight beheld, limping, as best he could, 315
 He left the field, and, to avoid a fate
 Not less tremendous, dropp'd into a ditch.
 Troxartes grazed the instep of the bold
 Physignathus, who at the sudden pang
 Startled, at once leap'd down into the lake. 320
 Prasseus³³, at the sight of such a Chief
 Floating in mortal agonies enraged,
 Sprang through his foremost warriors, and dismiss'd
 His pointed rush, but reach'd not through his shield
 Troxartes, baffled by the stubborn disk. 325

There was a Mouse, young, beautiful and brave
 Past all on earth, son of the valiant Chief
 Artepibulus³⁴. Like another Mars
 He fought, and Meridarpax³⁵ was his name, 330
 A Mouse, among all Mice without a peer.
 Glorying in his might on the lake's verge
 He stood with other Mouse none at his side,
 And swore to extirpate the whole croaking race.

³⁰ The mud-walker. ³¹ The hoarse-croaker. ³² The cake-eater.

³³ One who deals much in garlic. ³⁴ One who lies in wait for bread.

³⁵ The scrap-catcher.

Nor doubted any but he should perform
 His dreadful oath, such was his force in arms,
 Had not Saturnian Jove with sudden note
 Perceived his purpose; with compassion touch'd
 Of the devoted Frogs the Sovereign shook
 His brows, and thus the Deities address'd. 335

I see a prodigy, ye Powers divine!
 And, with no small amazement smitten, hear
 Prince Meridarpax menacing the Frogs
 With general extirpation. Haste—be quick—
 Dispatch we Pallas terrible in fight,
 Not her alone, but also Mars, to quell
 With force combined the sanguinary Chief. 345

So spake the Thunderer, and thus Mars replied.
 Neither the force of Pallas, nor the force
 Of Mars, O Jove! will save the destined Frogs
 From swift destruction. Let us all descend
 To aid them, or, lest all suffice not, grasp
 And send abroad thy biggest bolt, thy bolt
 Tempestuous, terror of the Titian race,
 By which those daring enemies thou slew'st,
 And didst coerce with adamantine chains
 Enceladus, and all that monstrous brood. 355

He said, and Jove dismiss'd the smouldering bolt.
 At his first thunder, to its base he shook
 The vast Olympian. Then—whirling about
 His forked fires, he launch'd them to the ground,
 And, as they left the Sovereign's hand, the heart
 Of every Mouse quaked, and of every Frog.
 Yet ceased not, even at that shock, the Mice
 From battle, but with double ardour flew
 To the destruction of the Frogs, whom Jove
 From the Olympian heights snow-crown'd again
 Viewing, compassionated their distress,
 And sent them aids. Sudden they came. Broad-back'd
 They were, and smooth like anvils, sickle-claw'd,
 Sideling in gait, their mouths with pincers arm'd,
 Shell-clad, crook-knee'd, protruding far before
 Long hands, and horns, with eye-balls in the breast, 370

Legs in quaternion ranged on either side,
 And Crabs their name. They seizing by his leg,
 His arm, his tail a Mouse, cropp'd it, and snapp'd
 His polish'd spear. Appall'd at such a foe,
 The miserable Mice stood not, but fled
 Heartless, discomfited. And now, the sun
 Descending, closed this warfare of a day.

375

380

THE END.



